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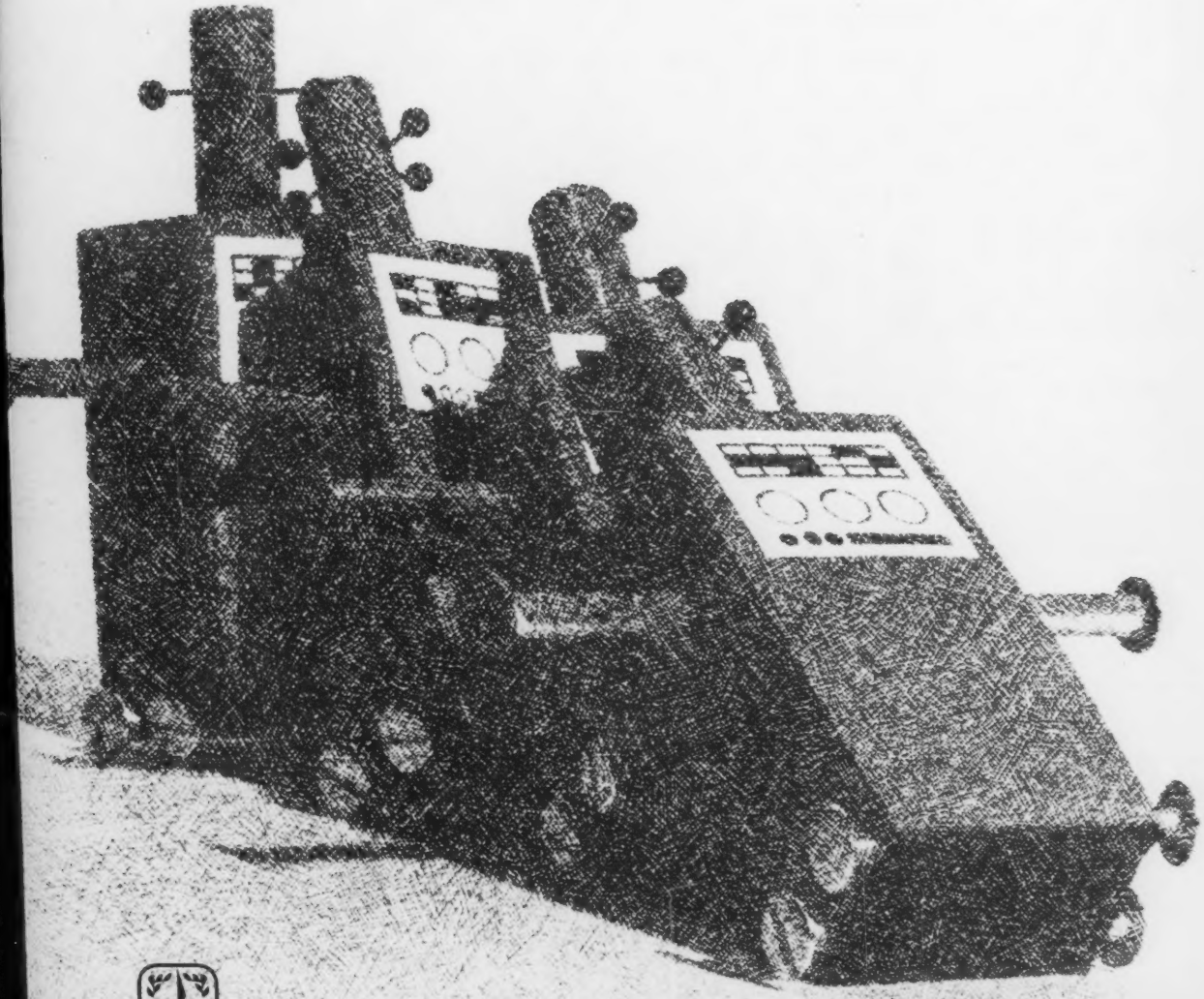
Vol. 17 No. 4 April/June 1977



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CIVIL SERVICE Journal

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U.S. CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

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WORTH NOTING

☐ NEW Civil Service Commission Chairman nominated: Alan Keith Campbell, former dean of the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas, has been nominated for Civil Service Commissioner, and the President has indicated his intention to name him as Chairman when confirmed. He would succeed Robert E. Hampton who resigned on January 20.

A native of Elgin, Neb., Campbell graduated from Wayne State University and has a Ph.D. from Harvard University.

Before joining the University of Texas, he was dean of the Maxwell School of Public Administration at Syracuse University.

☐ SENATE dissolves civil service committee: The Senate has voted to dissolve the Post Office and Civil Service Committee. Committee jurisdiction over the Federal service and postal affairs has been transferred to the Committee on Governmental Affairs.

☐ RATIO of employees represented by employee organizations declines

(Continued—See inside Back Cover)

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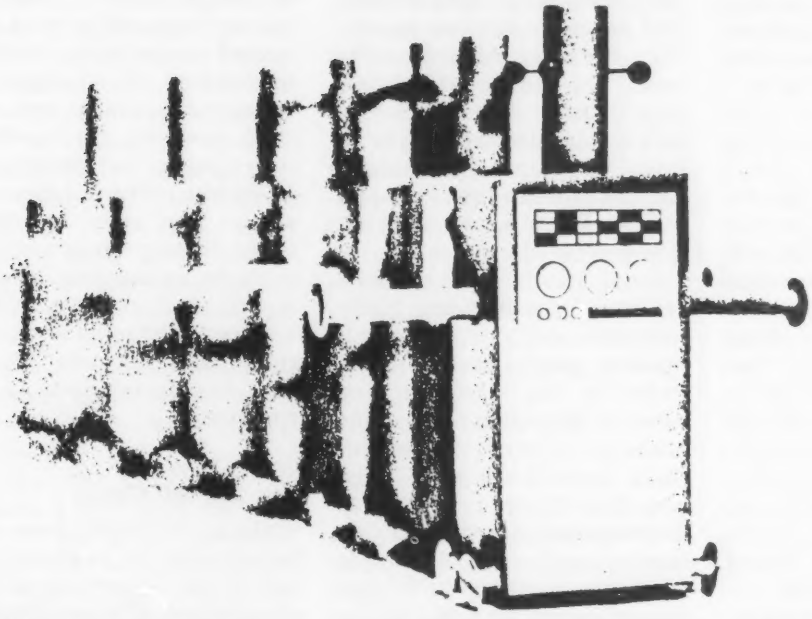
stop the assembly line,
I want to get off

MANAGING CHANGE IN GOVERNMENT

by Hugh F. McKenna



THE FEDERAL bureaucracy, with its real or imagined shortcomings, is a perennially favorite topic of the media. It has been characterized variously as tradition-bound, unimaginative, impersonal, enamored with shuffling paper, and engorged with nonproductive employees doing makework jobs. Those of us responsible for administering public programs know that such criticisms are sometimes fair, but more often unfair. Perhaps we do not publicize enough the many innovative ideas and tough-minded thinking involved in rejecting or implementing those ideas, along with the success stories that have come out of the public sector.

As a contribution toward filling this void, to help remove the often expressed but seldom warranted criticism of government managers, I have sketched here from personal experience one example of organizational change. This is the story of what one large bureau in one major agency has done to improve managerial effectiveness.

Mr. McKenna, now a management consultant, retired in 1975 as Associate Commissioner for Program Operations in the Social Security Administration. During his career in that organization from 1936 on, he covered the entire range of administration and management and was recipient of many awards including the 1974 Presidential Award for Management Improvement.

The bureau is the one I headed from 1967 to 1975, the Bureau of Retirement and Survivors Insurance of the Social Security Administration. The change was from a functional organization to what is called a "modular processing" organization. The planning, experimentation, and implementation all took place under my tenure, perhaps a rare experience. Because I was personally involved in the reorganization, I hope to be able to report not only the theory behind the change, but some of the practical problems an administrator must face in bringing about change. Since I am not now the administrator, I also feel uniquely free to report not only the problems but the successes produced by the people within the Bureau who have made this major reorganization work.

To present this case-study, it is necessary to review the Bureau's operation and some of the specifics of its organization. Although these

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details may have little relationship to the work of other administrators, readers will find that the basic problems are relevant and that the underlying philosophy in what was done applies to many other situations. Specifically, this report summarizes my experience on the need to face and to generate change, some specifics on the practical operations of a major paper-processing activity, a pragmatic approach to planning and making organizational changes, and some opinions on the difficulties and restrictions that must be hurdled.

Need To Face and To Generate Change

I am not overly impressed with complaints about changes that management must face in today's changing world. Responsible management has always had to search for better ways of doing things. A major difference is that today it may be more difficult for *irresponsible* management to hide behind "cosmetic" changes. In today's world, surface changes that ignore fundamental needs fail sooner, not later. But responsible public managers have always needed to anticipate problems and needs for change, not merely to react to problems by putting another patch on a wornout shoe.

When I came to the Bureau of Retirement and Survivors Insurance as its director in 1967, it quickly became apparent that fundamental changes were needed for two important reasons:

1. Service to the public was suffering. The strains imposed on the organization with the advent of Medicare and other legislative changes were severe. In 1967, the Bureau of Retirement and Survivors Insurance certified payment to 28 million people each month—over $60 billion a year in payments. This was an awesome responsibility. Management could not afford to stumble; any major failure would have had very serious consequences.

2. The six field offices that carry out the certification process were in danger of becoming huge paperwork factories. The six installations, presently called program service centers, range in size from 1,800 to 2,600 employees. Each year these program service centers receive about 26 million pieces of paper: claims, reports of changes in beneficiary status, letters, documents, computer-generated actions. Many of the highly technical jobs present a common concern. The range of possible actions is so broad and the knowledge that must be acquired and retained by each individual technician is so extensive that management needs to hire and promote—and keep—the best people who can be found if it is to provide adequate service.

Social Security Administration has been fortunate. Many highly competent, dedicated, and hard-working people have been attracted to the agency, in part because they share the same philosophy of service that has been SSA's foundation since its beginning. They believe in the program, and they come to the organization eager to contribute to something in which they can take pride. But how can enthusiasm for public service be sustained when paper processing becomes a deadening routine.

The agency was firmly committed to a policy of promotions from within; there was real opportunity for advancement, but promotions were often years away. Would the best clerical and technical people be lost to more glamorous jobs before we could fully develop them and place them in successively more responsible positions? We had to find a way to improve the quality of the working life, to involve our clerical and technical people more fully in the process of planning what we as an organization would do and how we would do it. We had to earn and keep their commitment.

If I have seemed to dwell more heavily on the second of these two reasons, let me put the picture back into perspective. Service to the public is *the* reason for SSA's existence. But solving the second problem is a way to solve the first. We must all strive to be "enlightened" managers and recognize obligations to our employees to make their working lives as satisfying as possible.

As a Federal manager, I was not interested in change *solely* for humanistic reasons. I was also looking for payoffs in terms of increased productivity, increased development of employee and managerial potential, and other public service benefits. I needed to attract, retain, and develop good people who truly cared about what we were doing, about the public we served. I needed people moving upward to management positions who did not think of themselves as working *for* the Social Security Administration, but who felt they *were* the Social Security Administration.

Growth Without Organizational Change

All of us know how slow bureaucracies are to change. The same is true of practically all large organizations, of course. Originally in 1941 the program service center, like Gaul, was divided operationally into three parts: Claims Authorization, Disbursement and Adjustment, and Accounting. There was also a small administrative staff, adding up to a total of 200 to 300 in a center. The three groups each had clear jobs to do and an inline workflow that was simple to understand.

By 1965, after many years of gradual but relentless changes in the law, procedure, and technology, the program service centers had nearly reached their present size. There were six major functional branches, a management support staff, and several smaller staffs. The routes and alternate processes by which incoming work became outgoing work were

about as clear as a workflow chart patterned after a Jackson Pollack painting.

Work was processed by passing through an assembly line of functional branches, each staffed with 200 to 500 people doing essentially the same type of work. No one component could lay claim to more than a piece of the total action. By the same token, no one component was responsible for the overall product. There could be no real pride in achievement, no real sense of accountability for failure.

Inordinate amounts of time were spent in deciding where the paper should be routed for the next processing action, arguing over which component had responsibility for a new task, coordinating changes in processing, arising from new legislation or technological improvements. Paper went back and forth between organizational components, and almost every time the paper moved it moved into a backlog or queuing point before further action.

In the mid-1960's, before Medicare, a time study was completed on one of the significant program center workloads, the difficult initial claim for social security benefits. *This study showed that the actual time during which a claim was being examined, coded, key-punched, and processed through all of the other work steps consumed only about 1 hour. But the time it took to get that claim through all of the steps that consumed that hour was about 45 days.* The rest of the time was spent in moving the paper from place to place, backlogging it until the action could be taken, counting it in and out of the various places, and so on. This sounds ridiculous, but it is not at all unusual in semi-automated assembly-line types of activities.

This type of organization was a result of deliberate specialization, or fragmentation, of the total job. It was not many generations removed from the old "scientific management" concepts: The task was to be as simple and repetitive as possible so that each step of a process was fast and "productive." Clearly, we were not achieving even the results that specialization was to provide. Clearly, we were not satisfying our employees. Simple repetitive tasks are dull, boring, and sometimes even insulting and degrading. They stem from a pessimistic attitude toward human competence.

Things had to be changed, but the organization had first to recognize that—

(1) The organizational "set" was so deep that major change was going to take a long time.

(2) The need for new ideas could not be met by rapid or radical replacement of the management cadre.

(3) The continuing job had to be done, since the mailroom brought literally tons of new paper in every day.

We could not close up the shop for retooling, yet there were some improvements that had to be made immediately to keep the organization afloat. We also had to move quickly to achieve a basis for flexibility and control from which we could undertake longer range changes.

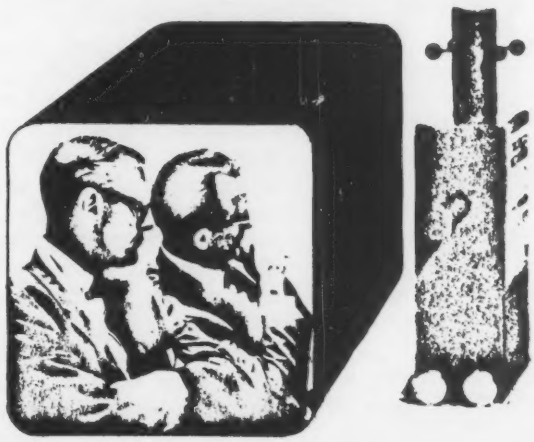
Initial Steps Toward the Final Goal

Early in my directorship a number of initial steps were taken. Several task forces were set up to study and identify problems and to propose solutions. One dealt with program service center operation, one with employee-management relations, and one with our policy functions, especially their responsiveness to operational needs.

Each task force was composed of representatives from within the Bureau, from elsewhere in the Social Security Administration, and from outside the agency. For example, the task force on employee-management relations was chaired by the late Willoughby Abner of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, and included a national vice-president of the American Federation of Government Employees and the president of one of the local unions.

There is nothing unusual in setting up task forces, of course. If there was any unusual aspect to this effort, it was adherence to a rigid time schedule, the quick decision on recommendations, the overwhelming proportion of recommendations that were accepted, and the methodical follow-through on the process and status of implementation.

We also developed a new top structure for the program service centers. This did not revise the large functional branches, per se, but it did dramatically affect managerial control. Historically, one person headed each program



service center. By 1962 that executive had acquired a deputy, but he also had a large number of operating branches and a small management staff reporting to him. When operating pressures mounted, what did he do? Just what most others would! He concentrated on day-to-day survival while the rest of the managerial activities—planning, personnel, labor-management relations, and so on—suffered. This increased his day-to-day problems, so he was caught in a vicious cycle.

The Bureau created two new high-level jobs to extricate center directors from this situation. One of these, the director of operations, was designed to take over the day-to-day coordination and problem-solving functions. The director of operations, in turn, was given assistants, each responsible for certain related functional branches. These latter jobs, especially, were not desk jobs; the incumbents were responsible for being out in the center, looking for and solving problems.

We also created the position of director of management, to whom the administrative offices reported, and who also was responsible for union-management relationships. Union-management relationships had reached a very serious stage, largely because branch chiefs had never been equipped to deal with union representatives, and day-to-day matters were taken up with the harried chief of the center.

The next step was to make managers at all levels aware of the importance of management itself. Traditionally, managers had been selected for their positions because they were the best technicians. They sometimes had little understanding of what a manager was expected to do and knew very little about the workings of the whole center other than their own branch.

A series of conferences was started in which we gave the managers themselves the task of leading discussions on general management.

They also led and participated in discussions on program policy since many managers had no real idea of policy objectives and why their employees were doing what they did.

Encouraging Responsibility and Participation

Another fact that had to be demonstrated to managers, and curiously enough even to the employees, was that employees can be responsible and need not have all their work reviewed. We began with several experiments in this direction. In the largest of the functional branches, we eliminated mandatory reviewing of the benefit authorizer's work. Instead, we told the technician to do his best job, carefully. If he thought he needed help he should ask for it, and if he thought he needed to have his work checked he gave it to someone to check. We eliminated the numeric production measurement and relied on the supervisor to get out from behind his desk and see what was going on—who was producing, who needed help.

Another aspect of the same experiment was to encourage supervisors to develop unit team identity through mutual goal setting, space arrangements, and work assignments. If this does not seem especially revolutionary, let me point out that the old "set" was so deep for some of the managers and employees that the only part of the experiment they could really grasp and accept initially was that the employees should have something to say about how their desks should be arranged. But the task of developing our managers and increasing the self-confidence and self-image of our employees was proceeding apace and we began to make some headway. Gradually managers became believers, not only in their employees but also in themselves and their own ability to adjust to fundamental changes in style.

The next major step was to abandon numeric production standards and individual numeric measurement throughout the program service centers. Numeric standards were being used as a crutch by some managers for promotion and performance evaluations. They were a bar to a more professional self-image among the highly skilled technicians. They also led employees, quite naturally, to a preoccupation with whether they were getting credit for an action they had taken. We wasted a lot of time deciding whether the "counts" were accurate, when we should have been concentrating on whether the action was accurate. I wanted all managers to stop treating each other, and the employees, like numbers.

An Early Failure

Not all of our early efforts succeeded. Our first experiment, directed toward giving a more professional status to some of our most difficult technical jobs, was a failure. Under this experiment, we were trying to free the top technicians from a lot of detailed clerical routing and coding tasks imposed by computer technology. Many employees loved the change. But counter to our expectations, the clericals made even more mistakes in the clerical work than the technicians had. And the technicians were slower and more careless in their technical work. We lost a lot of man-hours in the process and we have never been able to pinpoint definitely why the concept failed.

I think it is possible the organizational climate just was not right at that stage for the necessary cooperation and close working relationship between clerical and technical employees. There may have been a lack of respect and ap-

preciation on each side for the tasks of the other.

But not even this experience was wasted. There were some positive results. One aspect of the experiment changed the role of the technical assistant (the reviewer of a sample of the completed work) from that of an error-finder to that of a trainer, consultant, and adviser. This was a positive step, well-received, and we retained the concept and used it extensively in later efforts.

All the experiments and innovations that succeeded were useful in themselves. They helped to improve service to the public and they improved the work environment for large groups of employees. Our management team was being strengthened and was growing more professional in the process.

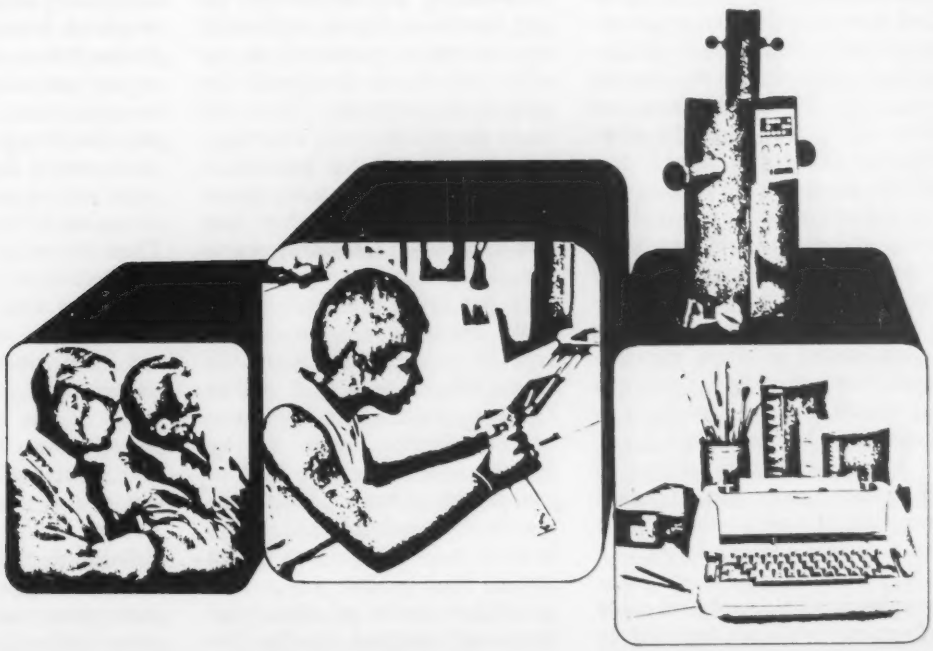
We could have stopped there, but we had always kept in sight one of the recommendations endorsed by the task forces mentioned earlier. It was an idea that had been floating around for some time—to reorganize into smaller, self-contained groups, each responsible for completing most or all of the neccessary processing actions on a specific, identifiable part of the total workload. This was in contrast to the traditional functional branches that had responsibility for completing only a part of the work. This group would be a kind of "program service center within a program service center." There were also other variations proposed, but all revolved around the idea of smaller teams of employees.

To implement this idea would be a truly major undertaking. We had to consider the advantages and disadvantages carefully. We had to do a near-perfect job of planning or we would lose too much ground in handling our continuing workloads during the reorganization. But it still seemed like an idea whose time had come.

At this point it seemed desirable to secure the services of an outside consultant, and after appropriate preliminaries, a contract was signed with Fry Associates. They went through one of the program service centers and proposed a process-type organization similar to one of the variations we already had in mind. This type of organization was predicated on the various processing routines through which certain types of claims or actions would be completed.

Our staff went over their proposals to analyze costs and workload, and we found we would have an uneven pattern of work volumes due to the seasonal nature of some work. There would also be a serious impact on the grade classification of hundreds of people. There was one striking point about the study, though: As in our initial efforts, the consultants were proposing a structure comprised of relatively small, largely self-contained "modules." The study increased our confidence in the basic soundness of the idea.

As early as 1970 I wanted to experiment with the "program service center within a program service center" idea, but the conditions weren't right. However, we were laying groundwork: gradual changes in the old organizational "set," and a strengthening of the management cadre.



Each experiment had had to meet the test of providing some value in itself as well as achieving a basis for flexibility and control from which we could undertake longer range changes. We had also been upgrading our space and negotiating for new buildings that would be built especially for flexibility of paperwork operations. We intended to be ready to seize any opportunity when the right combination of conditions presented itself.

The Initial Experiment

The chance came in Philadelphia with a fortuitous juxtaposition of the renting of short-term space in a separate building and a reassignment of some workload from New York to Philadelphia. The size of the workload, the size of the floor space, the number of people, and the organization design seemed to be just right. So I said "Go!"

We had some setbacks initially, largely as a result of inadequate preparation of managers and lack of understanding of some basic workflow techniques. This was painful. It was something I had emphasized; it was something we had been working on in general terms for a long time. I had expected that employee reaction would be the delicate thing, but that was good from the start! Employees liked their new relationships, worked intelligently, and did very well. We learned from our mistakes, and problems in the situation were corrected in about 3 months.

Gradually the data analysis charts started to show improvement, and within a year the little experiment had the best charts in the country. To cite just one figure, we had a productivity increase of 15 percent over our standard operation. It wasn't perfect, but it was a dramatic improvement.

We tried variations in other program service centers; we made refinements while we were still in an experimental mode. The resulting "module," which we were ready to move from the experimental to the implementation stage, consisted of a team of about 45 people.

Each module was staffed and equipped to handle most of the clerical and technical functions previously broken up into huge specialized branches. The module manager and his two assistant managers were given responsibility for the full range of actions taken in the module—quite literally, the processing of a claim and of subsequent payment maintenance actions from start to finish. As a result, jurisdictional disputes between the managers of different specialties became outmoded with the organizational counterpart of the concept of "the buck stops here."

In the module, improvements in workflow were substantial and immediate. The old shibboleth of "when in doubt, route" was replaced with a much more efficient and practical "let's talk this over." The physical proximity and team-identification of the clerks and technicians encouraged cooperation. The employee in the old functional branch could only wonder what happened to the claim after it was dropped in the ubiquitous outbasket. Now the employee could "see" what happened to it, and if it bounced, a coworker would probably hand-carry it back to discuss how they could correct it. Ordinarily, we no longer had queuing points before each step in the process.

We did away with the old concept of central files, where we stored all of the 4 to 5 million folders maintained by each program service center. We no longer needed our old fleet of canvas carts to carry bundle upon bundle of cases from one branch's dispatch point to another's receipt station. Each module was given a specified share of the total workload, assigned by the first three digits of the social security account number. Each module maintained its own files right in the module where they were immediately accessible when an action had to be taken.

Job Enrichment a Strength

Naturally, not every little specialty that had existed in the old branches could be replicated in a separate job in the module, nor was it desirable that it should be. We thought that combining various tasks into one position would be one of the strengths of the modular concept, and through job enrichment would provide increased job satisfaction for the employee. This was borne out by experience.

Although jobs were redesigned for a number of different positions, just one example may clearly illustrate the direction we took. Under the traditional organization, we had file clerks who did nothing all day long but pull folders or file paper. Other clerks did nothing but key account numbers into an electronic case control system. Others spent the day classifying incoming material for routing purposes. Some clerks prepared folder jackets for new claims. Others spent their day picking up and delivering folders and counting them in and out. (I'm oversimplifying, of course; each of these people did do a number of other related tasks, but I've identified their principal function.) These jobs were repetitive and boring. Because of the constant stream of folders and paper, the clerks literally were never finished with any task, and job satisfaction eluded them.

All of the functions I listed above, and a few others besides, were combined into one position: that of the records analysis clerk. Because of the increased responsibilities, we were able to upgrade the classification for the journeyman position and provide a career ladder that permitted more

upward mobility. The new records analysis clerk could plan the use of work time to some extent, perform a variety of jobs that formed a meaningful whole, and see his or her role in the smooth functioning of the whole module. The employee could set individual goals to accomplish, and better prepare for higher level positions because of more familiarity with work throughout the module.

The whole concept of career ladders and upward mobility was enhanced. Bureau employees generally became better prepared than ever before for increasingly responsible positions. Dependent upon the employee's aptitude and inclination, upward mobility became possible through technical positions, management positions, or a combination of the two.

Certain jobs in the program service center had to stay centralized for obvious reasons—for example, the mailroom, computer room, and management support services, such as the personnel branch, but even in these functions a certain amount of "modularization" occurred by choice.

We formally established a statement of the goals of the modular organization so that we could communicate as clearly and accurately as possible the philosophy and purpose of the new organization to all Bureau employees. Comparing these goals with the problems outlined at the beginning of this article may be of interest. This goals statement follows—

For employees:

1. Create a work atmosphere that enhances employee satisfaction and morale.
2. Enable employees to see the value of their individual contribution as members of a team with an important mission.
3. Redesign jobs to make them more interesting and responsible.
4. Make upward mobility easier for all employees by providing daily exposure to most progam service center functions.

For managers:

1. Assign managers at all levels responsibility for related groups of tasks and functions instead of a small piece of the total job.
2. Move authority and independence nearer the problem level.
3. Identify and retain talented leaders in management.
4. Develop a large number of managers who understand the total program service center process.
5. Shift the attention of management from technical expertise to management of people, process, and program.

For the public:

1. Reduce processing time by simplifying workflow and by more effective control of the work.
2. Improve the quality of the work product.

"She'll never fly, Wilbur," the cynics said. And the cynics were almost right. Not because there was anything fundamentally wrong with the concept of modularization. Not because we had failed to do our homework in the planning stages. Not because we had failed to lay the proper groundwork. What almost caused us to come crashing to the ground were some hurdles thrown up at the end of the runway. We needed a little running room to get into the air—very basic and mundane things like turnaround space for moving desks and equipment. Those who were in a position to put their blessing on such requests had apparently not yet been convinced of the logistical imperative that before you can move Desk A to Space B you have to put whatever is in Space B somewhere else—at least temporarily.

Training for the new positions and new workflow required a tremendous commitment of time, space, and manpower. Almost everyone in the centers was involved in some phase of retraining. We needed some flexibility in staffing ceilings so we could temporarily overstaff certain positions and begin training while we continued to do our day-to-day work. Unfortunately this need occurred just as hiring and promotional freezes were coming down hard on all Federal jobs. Again we could not convince the budget people that we needed some running space before we could fly. To their eternal credit, the people in the Bureau somehow managed to get this thing in the air anyway, but with a lot more strain and worry than they would have had otherwise and at a price of some setbacks in handling our pending workloads.

We further complicated our lives by living with one organization on paper (the old traditional branch concept) and another in reality (the new modular concept), while the reorganization package worked its way very slowly through the agency and department for approval. The proposal bounced back and forth for almost 2 years between the Social Security Administration, the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, and the Civil Service Commission as various classification levels and other staffing requirements were hammered out. At many stages we had important operational objectives frustrated by delays in getting official approval for the next stage of the conversion.

It is proper that a change of this magnitude should receive careful attention at every level of approval and I do not argue that the proposal should have been pushed through without proper study. It was a relatively new idea and it received a great deal of attention, as it should have. But as the time involved had an impact on very practical operational considerations, it was a source of frustration to Bureau management. It seemed to us to be another example of the bureaucratic red tape we were trying to cut from our own organization. Nothing was simple. Everything took too long and was

subject to discussion, counter-proposal, and in some instances, revision. It will take us some time to make up the ground we lost, and it is this kind of problem that the Bureau must continue to wrestle.

Reorganization Results

Did the new organization work? Did it meet the goals we had established?

Comments made by technical and clerical personnel indicate that it did work for employees. Following are typical appraisals by non-supervisory workers:

"A vast improvement . . . it has removed the battle between branches to make themselves look good with no consideration for any other branch. We now have unity, more cooperation, faster folder movement, and fewer errors. The work atmosphere is much better. The loafer seems to have disappeared with modularization."

"I like the modular system because it lets you see the end results of your work. If there are any errors made or changes in procedure, you know about them immediately and how to proceed. You also get to see how the other components in the module work."

"It has been the most aggressive, interesting, and exciting innovation during my tenure. It has given me and all other clerks the opportunity to learn all operations, thus giving us a sense of actually working the case up to the technical aspect, and with that, a sense of pride in our work."

"I have noticed a difference in the attitudes of all personnel. When we get to know each other better and how our efforts are interrelated, it seems to create a greater desire for cooperation, as opposed to rivalry. It serves our beneficiaries much better because incoming correspondence and claims can be much more readily serviced."

"I have seen a change to a cohesive group of people all working toward a common goal of service to the public."

"I now have so many different operations to perform, I'm never bored."

Comments made by managers also indicated that the changes produced desired results:

"You can feel the enthusiasm here. . .the modules give increased access to the managers by their people and engender a spirit of teamwork."

"Modules are the very best method for processing cases. Managers can stay on top of the work. It is an improvement over the traditional organization. It's all on your own back if you make a 'boo-boo.' They can't be hidden away in big backlogs. People, especially claims authorizers, learn the overall operation and like their work better. Problems surface much quicker and get solved quicker. You can keep up with what people are doing on their jobs. I really like it. Time goes fast."

"The modules are working fine. Under the old organization, many mangers didn't know or understand the total workflow. Now, they have a complete overview and this is one good effect. All of us have much better appreciation of the work that others do. Too, we no longer have any crutch for poor performance. We can't blame our mistakes on anybody else. Now they are the individual manager's problem, and there are no built-in excuses for not doing things right."

"Modularization?! My regret is that it did not come 10 years ago when I entered management. Analysis of our basic objective—to pay the correct amount to the correct person timely, and the proper use of resources to accomplish this worthy objective—lead to this conclusion. Getting and properly placing managers who will accept and transfer to their subordinates real leadership is the key to process time of less than 12 days, with individual output and quality at a high level. In many modules it has already been demonstrated that this can be done."

With respect to service to the public, the Bureau has thus far failed to improve accuracy to any substantial degree, although prospects remain optimistic. As to processing time, the situation varies among the centers as related to particular space and staffing situations, timing of the shift to the modular structure, etc. However, the Southeastern Program Service Center, the first to convert completely to the modular structure, and helped by a move into a large new building in 1975, reduced processing time on initial awards from 29 days to 16 days by early 1976. No other center has done as well, but all have improved.

Does the modular organization work as we had hoped it would? We are still in "the process of becoming," and if this is to be a viable organization, we always shall. From the foregoing, however, I think the answer to the question would clearly be yes. CSJ

Retired Uniformed Services Personnel in the Federal Service

The U.S. Civil Service Commission has been providing to Congress, on a 3-year cycle, studies of Federal civilian employee who have retired from the uniformed services. Here are some highlights from a 1975 study.

Background

The study's purpose was to provide the House Subcommittee on Manpower and Civil Service with data to measure the impact of reemployment of uniformed services' annuitants (retirees) on the Federal civilian work force. To be included in the study, each individual must have been receiving retirement benefits from one of the four military services—Army, Air Force, Navy, or Marine Corps; or from either the Public Health Service, the Commissioned Corps of NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration), or the Coast Guard. In addition, each individual must have been actively employed in the Federal civilian service on June 30, 1975.

The study contained outputs based on personnel data taken from the Commission's Central Personnel Data File (CPDF) and military-related data provided by the seven uniformed services. (The CPDF is a major file maintained by the Civil Service Commission as the source for statistical studies based on selected personnel characteristics of Federal civilian employees.)

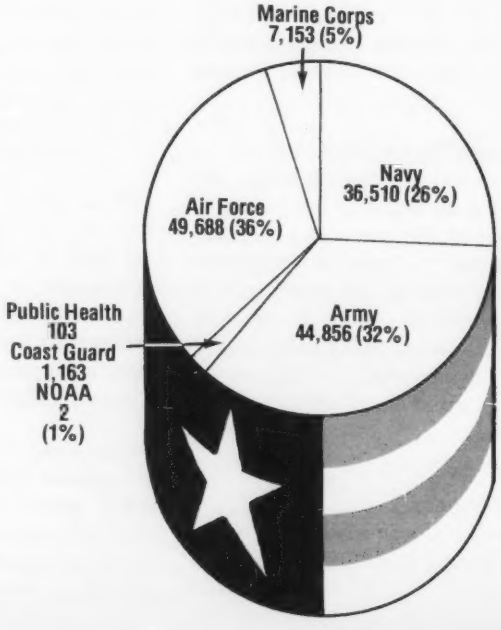
Major personnel characteristics used in the development of the study were agency of employment, age, pay system, geographic location of employment, and occupation; military-related data were rank at retirement, uniformed service from which retired, basis of retirement (disability, nondisability), and military component (regular participation or participation in reserves, national guards).

Coverage was limited to the scope available from the CPDF. The CPDF maintains personnel data on about 97 percent of the entire Federal civilian work force. Study coverage for the judicial branch included employment in the Administrative Office of the United States Courts only, and coverage for the legislative branch included employment in the Federal Election Commission, National Study Commission, General Accounting Office, Government Printing Office, and United States Tax Courts. For the executive branch, coverage was almost total. Employment data are not maintained in the CPDF for the White House, Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve, Tennessee Valley Authority, or, by law, for the Central Intelligence Agency and the National Security Agency.

The following materials show retiree strength in the Federal civilian service categorized by a number of personnel and military-related characteristics. In certain instances, data will not add to established totals because not all CPDF data, nor all military-related data, met the prescribed editing criteria.

Study Results

On June 30, 1975, there were 141,817 uniformed services' retirees employed in the Federal agencies studied. This figure represented about 5 percent of their aggregate work force of 2,809,541. The following chart distributes these individuals by uniformed service at retirement. The percentages show each ser-



vice's comparative contribution to the total retirees identified in the study.

Retirees employed in the executive branch departments, agencies, and commissions numbered 106,820, 75 percent of the total retirees reported in this study and 5.2 percent of all individuals working in the executive branch. For comparison, total employment in the executive branch included 75 percent of all Federal civilian job-holders.

Major employers of retirees in the executive branch were the Department of Defense (78,124), Veterans Administration (7,288), Department of Transportation (3,585), and the Treasury Department (2,939). Those in DoD represented 73 percent of all retirees identified in the executive branch and 55 percent of all retirees reported in the study. (For comparison, the Department of Defense had 48 percent of the total executive branch employment and 36 percent of all Federal civilian employment.)

The six judicial and legislative branch commissions and offices employed 273 retirees, 2 percent of the total civilians employed in the two branches. Although they had 0.5 percent of total Federal civilian employment, these six commissions and offices employed only 0.2 percent of the retirees identified. All but 21 worked for either the General Accounting Office or the Government Printing Office.

Working for the United States Postal Service (USPS) were 34,724 retirees, 4.8 percent of all employees in USPS and 24 percent of all retirees reported in the study. As a comparison, USPS accounted for 26 percent of all Federal civilian employees.

Individuals who retired as commissioned or warrant officers comprised 20 percent of all retirees identified. Of these 27,682 retirees, 23,097 were commissioned officers and 4,585 were warrant officers. Most of the retired officers (22,518) came from nonregular components of their services (national guards, reserves). The remaining 5,164 came from regular components; being "regular officers," they were subject, under provisions of the Dual Compensation Act, to reductions in retirement pay upon entry into the civilian service, except under special cases.

Those Federal civilian employees who had retired as enlisted personnel numbered 111,793 and accounted for 80 percent of the retirees in the study. As a group, the enlisted retirees outnumbered those who retired as officers by 4 to 1. A vast majority of these personnel came from regular components of their services. Unlike the regular officers, these enlisted retirees were not subject to reductions in retirement benefits under the Dual Compensation Act.

There were 177 Federal civilian employees who had retired with flag rank, including 16 generals or admirals, 34 lieutenant generals or vice admirals, 67 major generals or rear admirals (upper half), and 60 brigadier generals or rear admirals (lower half). As a group, these officers accounted for about 0.1 percent of all retirees identified. Representing the largest group of officers, about 8 percent of all retirees, were 11,167 colonels, lieutenant colonels, and individuals with equivalent grades. Retired as sergeants major and those at equivalent grades (the highest enlisted grades) were 5,566 individuals, 4 percent of all retirees. Fifty-four percent (76,391) retired as staff sergeants, platoon sergeants, or their equivalent grades.

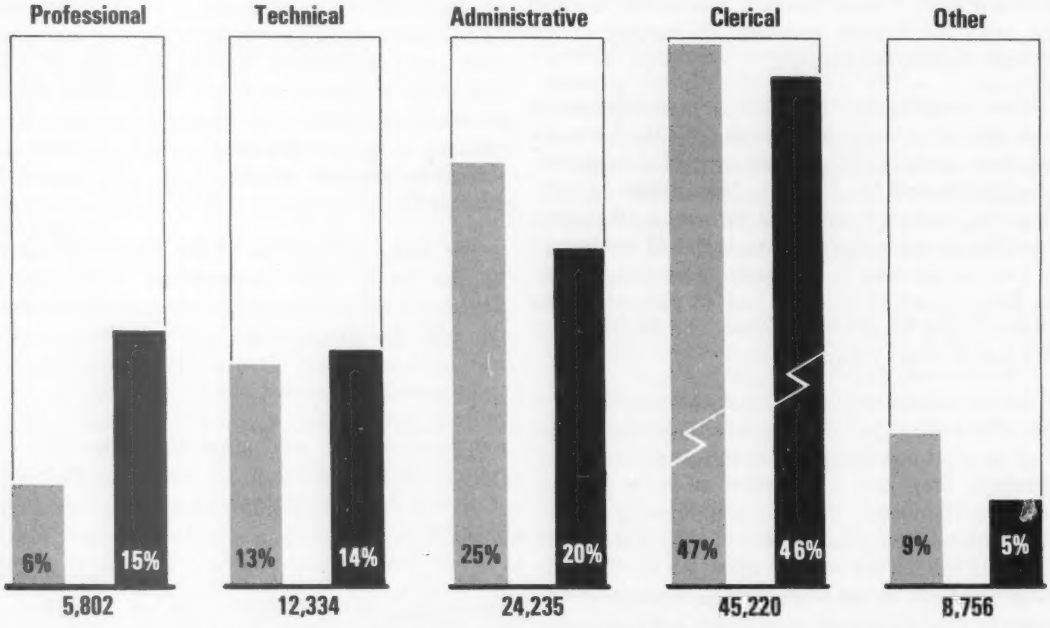
The study showed that 63,509 retirees (45 percent of the total) were compensated under General Schedule (GS) and equivalent pay systems. Those under only the General Schedule numbered 62,273. Fifty-four percent of the entire Federal civilian work force were compensated under these systems. Those retirees being paid under Federal wage systems numbered 42,252, accounting for 30 percent of all retirees. For comparison, 17 percent of all Federal civilians were compensated under these wage systems.

As the major pay systems for white-collar employees, the General Schedule and its equivalents provided compensation to 79 percent of the officers and to 36 percent of the enlisted personnel. As the major pay systems for blue-collar employees, the Federal wage systems provided compensation to only 5 percent of the officers and 36 percent of the enlisted personnel. For those compensated under these wage systems, enlisted personnel outnumbered officers by 27 to 1. The comparable ratio for those under the General Schedule and its equivalents was 2 to 1.

The remaining retirees (36,056 individuals) were either employed by the United States Postal Service, were not specified by pay system, or were compensated under other systems, including the Executive Schedule. Out of the total 376 employees in the Executive Schedule, 22 were retirees—21 of them retired as officers.

Just over 1 percent (1,505) of the uniformed services' retirees in the Federal service had civilian salaries of under $6,000 per year, the comparable figure for the entire work force being 4 percent. At annual salaries of $36,000 and above were 0.6 percent (796) of the retirees; the comparable total work force percentage was the same. Most retirees (66 percent) and most of the total civilian work force (57 percent) had annual salaries in the $10,000-$17,999 range.

Sixtv-eight percent of the retirees in the Federal civilian service were in white-collar occupations. The following chart shows the percentage distribution of these 96,347 individuals into the five established white-collar occupational categories, and for comparison (see note), the percentage distribution of all Federal civilian employees into the same five categories. Retiree figures are represented by the shaded areas.



NOTE: Data used for the derivations of percentages, by white-collar occupational category, for the total civilian work force were taken from the Commission publication, *Occupations of Federal White-Collar Workers, October 31, 1975.* Although these data do not include part-time and intermittent employment, they may be used for comparison with retiree study data that do include part-time and intermittent employment.

There were 45,010 retirees in blue-collar occupations, 32 percent of the total. Eighty percent of these individuals (36,220) were in either "skilled" or "semi-skilled" occupations. As a group, they represented 80 percent of all retirees in blue-collar occupations and nearly 26 percent of all retirees. Eleven percent of the other retirees in blue-collar occupations were "highly skilled" (4,863) and nine percent were in "unskilled" occupations (3,927).

Statistics showed that 13 percent (17,522) of the former uniformed services' personnel retired as the result of some type of disability. Those remaining were considered, for study purposes, to have retired with no disability.

—Bill Anderson

...but who do you give the apple to?

NEW SCHOOL BY MAIL OFFERS TRAINING ALTERNATIVE

by James R. Beck
Director, Bureau of Training
U.S. Civil Service Commission

THE KEYSTONE of any attempt to establish an effective government agency is the development of a knowledgeable and efficient work force. The manager who knows how to transform new recruits into skilled experts while simultaneously improving the performance of his veteran employees has half his problems solved already. Unfortunately, there are difficulties associated with each method of achieving these changes.

On-the-job training appears to be inexpensive, but improvements come relatively slowly and the agency's efficiency suffers from mistakes made while employees are learning. Classroom training brings results more quickly, but is more expensive and often difficult to arrange. Some employees, especially in outlying offices, may not have access to classes; those who could reach the classes may not be able to attend due to scheduling problems or restrictions on class size. For those who do attend, problems may arise from having to take time off from the job according to a schedule rather than as the workload permits.

The Civil Service Commission recognized the problems that exist with these methods of training and the need for alternatives.

As a result, the National Independent Study Center (NISC) was established in April 1976. The Center, located in Denver, Colo., provides nonclassroom independent study training opportunities to Federal, State, and local government employees nominated by their agencies or governmental units.

Independent study includes those self-contained training activities for which no formal classroom setting is necessary. The NISC programs are complete, self-contained training products. Students interact with the Center through student-initiated questions and through feedback from the Center on evaluation of student progress and course examinations. The Center staff is available to assist students in any course-related activities, from answering questions to providing encouragement when needed.

Advantages of Independent Study

Independent study has many features that make it an attractive optional method of instruction for the employee and the nominating agency. It meets the special needs of some people who may be unable to attend classroom sessions. Independent study training reaches out to the students where they are. Since enrollment doesn't depend on a specific class in a particular location on a definite starting date, independent study permits enrollment whenever the need for training exists and the employing agency submits a nomination. With the flexibility of continuous enrollment, independent study can more closely respond to learning readiness.

Some people, particularly adults, feel more psychologically secure in a learning setting that permits them to work independently and at their own pace. With independent study, employees are able to complete assignments at a pace consistent with their abilities.

Faster students are not held back and others are not left behind. Those who do not learn as fast have extra time to better understand what they are studying. Independent study provides individual student feedback throughout the course.

One major benefit of independent study is the opportunity students have to integrate their course learning into their jobs. Students can apply what they are studying to real-life situations. The immediate usefulness of the learned material demonstrates the

relevance of the course and creates an environment that encourages students to complete their studies.

Independent study generally costs less than comparable classroom courses. Since government managers must constantly seek ways to stretch training dollars, independent study offers a cost-effective way to meet some training requirements. Travel, food and lodging, and temporary costs are nil. Time spent away from the job may be reduced. Planning and scheduling work are easier because the employee spends less time away from the job and can be productive during the training.

Limitations of Independent Study

Independent study, particularly correspondence training, has been criticized and often maligned. Some criticism is justified, but some is not. One must separate the methodology from the delivery and promises of the delivering institution. Part of the responsibility for poor correspondence training rests with the advertising and promises of some organizations training through this mode.

The instructional methodology, however, does have several limitations that make it inappropriate in some situations. These limitations include:

Subject matter limitation. Certain subjects are not amenable to independent study. The delivery of some subject matter, for instance, might require face-to-face interaction between an instructor and student, or call for hands-on practice to make the student proficient with the associated hardware or software.

Lack of interaction. Some material, by nature, requires interaction between the student and instructor or among students in a group.

Student learning styles. Some students are more successful where they can learn by listening rather than by reading. The Center is investigating ways to capitalize on these differences in learning styles.

Student motivation and completion rates. Lack of student motivation to complete course materials is a problem facing all institutions involved in independent study. While the student must be self-motivated, the Center uses many techniques to reduce or eliminate the stumbling blocks to completion of materials. Material is presented in short blocks of information that can be completed in a reasonable amount of time. Materials are readable and directed toward the objective. The student has ample opportunity to interact with the Center's staff, if needed.

The Center recognizes that independent study is one of several ways to provide training, and that it may not be appropriate for all training. The Center staff is investigating those subject areas that can be effectively taught by independent study and is devoting its efforts toward appropriate subject matters and target audiences.

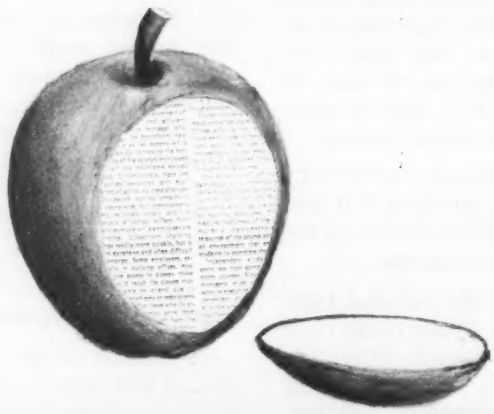
Role of the Center

The National Independent Study Center exists to provide training for agency-nominated government employees. It was recognized early in planning for the Center that a primary task is to keep students motivated to complete the training package. Students must bring to the training a sense of motivation, but the Center must also do all it can to establish rapport with students, to give them a sense of human interaction and interest on the part of the Center toward them.

The Center staff is supportive of the students by reducing or eliminating the negative motivators or stumbling blocks associated with traditional correspondence training. One way it does this is by providing course materials that are stimulating as well as informative.

The Center gives special attention to the selection of course formats, layouts, and designs that will most effectively aid in student learning in each course. This is done to ensure that course packages meet stated course objectives and will be interesting to the students. Each course is divided into units or modules that can be completed quickly. The content of each course module is directed toward the stated objectives and is as free as possible from extraneous content.

All Center courses have built-in mechanisms for student feedback.



Reinforcement and practice exercises provide students with immediate feedback on new learning. These exercises, spaced at intervals throughout the course, strengthen students' learning, guide students in effectively studying the material, and motivate them to complete the course.

Evaluations of student progress are designed as diagnostic tools and provide students with progress reports. Upon successful completion of any of the Center's courses, students are awarded a certificate of completion, while a record of training is provided to the agency's employing office.

The Center staff constantly seeks ways to respond to students quickly. By remaining supportive to the students and sensitive to their needs, the Center tries to increase the assistance and encouragement offered throughout the training.

Present Curriculum

The present National Independent Study Center curriculum consists of a nucleus of courses, primarily in personnel management, in such high-interest areas as equal employment opportunity and labor relations. Other courses deal with government writing and retirement. The Center plans to add courses in the broad subject areas of management, supervision, written communications, office skills, mathematics, and statistics.

All NISC courses have certain common characteristics. The typical course has:

Learning objectives. These are stated for the course and each unit of the course. The objectives are student-oriented, telling the students what is expected of them and guiding them throughout the course.

Structured content. Courses are constructed to present the material in an interesting and informative way. It may be a narrative with a story line or a series of exercises programmed to elicit correct responses, each response building on the previous ones.

Criterion-based evaluation. Progress of the students is measured by several means. Some of these are student self-check measures to provide immediate feedback and reinforcement. Other measures provide the Center with information that helps evaluate the progress of each student. These evaluations are scored and results returned to the students. This gives additional feedback to the students, advising them of progress, problems, or gaps in learning.

Future Direction of NISC

Since its establishment in April 1976, NISC has grown rapidly. Enrollments exceeded 7,420 between May 1 and November 30, 1976. To continue this rate of progress, the Center is developing more courses—for example, Writing Analytical Reports, Writing Effective Memos and Letters, Writing Short Reports, Mathematics Review, and Practical Statistics.

For more information, write:
Director
National Independent Study Center
U.S. Civil Service Commission
Denver Federal Center
Building 20
Denver, Colo. 80225 CSJ

Presidential Interest in Employee Ideas

". . . the initiation of changing ideas will not be from the White House, not from the Secretary level, not from Office of Management and Budget, but from you. . . . If you have had for a long time pent-up ideas . . . you will have a chance this year to show your contribution to the Federal Government can be of profound significance."

Such remarks by President Carter have triggered new thinking about the Federal suggestion system in some Government agencies. Several have been quick to respond to the President's intent to involve employees in change. And several are using existing program structures to encourage Federal personnel to suggest improvement ideas and to receive appropriate awards for accepted ideas.

The *Department of Commerce* was among the first, launching a "Special Idea Effort" for departmental personnelists. Each personnel management employee was asked to suggest improvements, especially in communications and personnel office services and procedures. This special effort began in November 1976 and continued through March 1977.

The drive was announced in a memorandum from the director of personnel emphasizing that an idea need not be original—suggestions on successful techniques used by one organization, which had application elsewhere in the Department, would be considered for awards. Early results showed a participation rate of 10.4 percent (the Government-wide rate during Fiscal Year 1976 was 7.4 percent). Commerce officials believe that the special drive will produce substantial benefits of both a tangible and intangible nature.

At the *Civil Service Commission,* Acting Chairman Georgiana H. Sheldon asked all employees to identify ways to improve Commission operations and its services to the public. In addition to using the ongoing suggestion program, employees were asked to make a special, concentrated, 2-month effort to produce ideas aimed at making the Commission effective, efficient, and responsive.

Department of the Army has launched Project 77/77, a special drive for suggestions from both civilian and military personnel. The project title indicates the goal—$77 million in tangible benefits to the Government during calendar year 1977.

Organizational elements within the department will select at least a 3-month period when they will emphasize suggestions for economies and improvements. Special recognition, in addition to cash awards, may be given at the departmental level to personnel whose suggestions result in tangible benefits of $50,000 or more.

A Project 77/77 logo on promotional items and a paycheck flyer distributed Army-wide will publicize the project.

It is interesting that these special efforts, independently initiated by three organizations in which the mission, size, complexity, and composition of the work force differ greatly, have common characteristics vital to a successful suggestion program:

—Top management initiated the special emphasis.

—Intermediate management took part in the promotional and/or processing aspects of the special efforts.

—Personnel are confident—due to management's assurances—that their suggestions will receive serious consideration.

—Management pledges to consider ideas promptly.

Special suggestion efforts highlight an important fact about suggestion programs. If an agency uses an employee idea submitted informally—not through normal suggestion program channels—the idea may be considered for an award if documented appropriately.

There is no doubt that efforts such as those at Commerce, the Civil Service Commission, and Army are of value to an agency beyond the obvious increased tangible benefits and improved services. The Government also benefits from increased motivation and productivity. Employees who see their suggestions adopted and put into effect also tend to acquire a proprietary interest in them, along with an increased involvement in the effectiveness and productivity of their operation.

President Carter has made a commitment to the American people for more effective government. He also has made it clear that he wants ideas for change to come from personnel at all levels of Government.

The President places high priority on reducing the burden that reporting to the Federal Government

places upon the public, and on doing something about the number and complexity of Federal regulations. These are two specific areas to which the imagination and creativity of Federal personnel should be directed.

The suggestion program offers the ideal vehicle through which agency managers and supervisors can improve their programs in helping to meet the President's commitment to the American people.

—Edith A. Stringer

INTERGOVERNMENTAL PERSPECTIVES

The IPA and Indian Tribal Governments

Since January 1975, when the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (P.L. 93-638) was passed, the U.S. Civil Service Commission has awarded nearly $400,000 in Intergovernmental Personnel Act grant funds for projects benefiting Indian tribal governments.

The new legislation amended the Intergovernmental Personnel Act to make Indian tribal governments eligible to participate in all IPA programs. In addition to making the tribal governments eligible to receive IPA grant funds, the new Act paved the way for IPA mobility assignments to be made, both to and from Indian tribes, and for the Office of Native American Programs (HEW) and the Bureau of Indian Affairs (Interior) to invest several hundred thousand dollars so that CSC regional offices could provide direct personnel and training assistance to tribal governments.

Grants: A Prompt Response

P.L. 93-638 extended IPA benefits to Indian tribal governments, but did not provide any corresponding increase in appropriations to cover this expansion. Despite this, 32 IPA grant projects involving tribal governments in 17 States have been funded to date. Counting both IPA funds and matching shares from grantees, the total cost is more than $900,000.

Most of the projects involve personnel system improvements and training for tribal government employees in management and administration. One project involves "circuit-riders" for native villages administered by the Alaska Department of Community and Regional Affairs. Under this program, five local government specialists visit 20 isolated rural communities to train in subjects such as budget preparation, municipal reporting requirements, election conduct and management, ordinance writing, labor-management relations, and taxes and city revenues.

Other grant projects have included writing an administrative manual (Inter-Tribal Council, Inc., of Oklahoma), establishing a tribal personnel office (Makah Tribe of Washington), upgrading a classification and pay system (Navajo Tribe of Arizona), and developing personnel systems (Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, Santa Clara Indian Pueblo of New Mexico, Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians of North Dakota, and Creek and Cherokee Nations of Oklahoma).

Eighty percent of the IPA grant appropriation is allocated among States according to an objective formula; the remaining 20 percent is awarded by the Commission in discretionary grants to meet needs not met by formula funds. Significantly, by June 30, 1976, 63 percent of IPA grants to benefit Indian tribal governments had been made from formula funds, demonstrating a high level of cooperation between such governments and State and local jurisdictions.

Mobility: Talent Sharing

The IPA authorizes the temporary exchange of personnel between Federal executive agencies and States, local governments, institutions of higher education, and—since the 1975 passage of P.L. 93-638—Indian tribal governments. In the last 2 years, 16 different tribes or tribal organizations have participated in 36 mobility assignments. Thirty-three Federal employees have gone on assignment to tribal governments, and three tribal employees have been posted to Federal agencies.

Some of the Federal employees participating in the program are themselves native Americans. For example, Walter Wetzel and Orval Packard both work in Denver for the U.S. Department of Labor. Montana-native Wetzel, former Chairman of the Blackfeet Tribe and past President of the National Congress of American Indians, recently began a mobility assignment with the Montana Employment Security Commission, where he will help bring jobs to the State's 45,000-strong Indian population. Packard, who was raised on South Dakota's Lower Brule Reservation, has also returned to his home State via a mobility assignment. He will direct employment and training programs for the Oglala Sioux Tribal Council on the Pine Ridge Reservation.

Other mobility assignments to tribal governments have been made to fill such positions as director of economic development, tribal operations officer, and director of natural resources.

Direct Assistance:
Helping To Build Management Skills

Tribal governments in several States have undertaken projects to improve their personnel systems via direct technical help from the U.S. Civil Service Commission.

One of the first such projects was a 12-month effort by five Indian tribal governments in the Denver Region to set-up merit-based personnel systems. The five governments were located on the Standing Rock Reservation in North Dakota, Rosebud and Pine Ridge Reservations in South Dakota, Southern Ute Reservation in Colorado, and Uintah-Ouray Reservation in Utah.

This technical assistance program, like many that followed, was the result of an agreement between HEW's Office of Native American Programs (ONAP) and a Commission regional office. In fact, cooperation between the Commission and other Federal agencies has characterized IPA technical assistance to Indian tribal governments. For example:

CSC-ONAP-BIA: The Office of Native American Programs and the Bureau of Indian Affairs have entered into agreements with some CSC regional offices to provide technical help in personnel administration to tribal governments. In San Francisco this agreement has covered such activity as classification audits and preparation of a manual on personnel policies and procedures for the Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada, preparing personnel rules for the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe of Nevada, and training in classification techniques for the All Indian Pueblo Council of New Mexico. The San Francisco office also started an 8-month intern program to train tribal employees in personnel management. The agreement in the Denver Region provides for a similar intern program.

CSC-DOL: In Denver, an agreement was made to provide technical help to the Three Affiliated Tribes of North Dakota under the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act, as approved by the Department of Labor.

CSC-GSA: CSC's Seattle regional office is working with the General Services Administration's National Archives and Records Service to help the Umatilla Tribe of Oregon develop a record-keeping system.

Accessibility

A number of steps have been taken to make the IPA more accessible to tribal governments. The Commission has prepared and distributed a pamphlet on *Personnel and Training Assistance for Indian Tribal Governments*. Arizona Governor Raul Castro and Nevada Governor Mike O'Callaghan have appointed tribal government representatives to serve on their IPA Advisory Councils. CSC's San Francisco office has appointed a Regional Tribal Government IPA Advisory Group to suggest ways of improving assistance to Indians, and has delegated a representative to serve as an associate member of the Western Federal Regional Council's Indian Committee. And CSC regional staffs have explained the assistance available through the IPA to tribal officials.

In short, since the signing of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act in 1975, the Commission has aggressively pursued its mandate of making IPA assistance available to all interested tribal governments.

—Susan E. M. Tejada

more information, less frustration

A NEW LOOK IN FEDERAL JOB APPLICATIONS

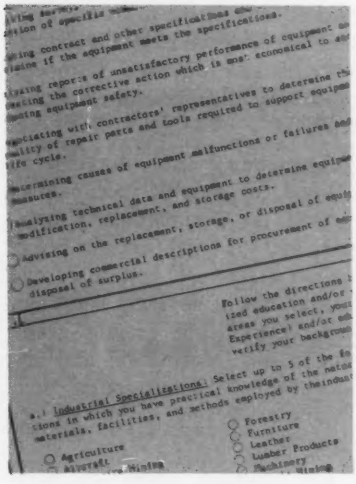
by Arch S. Ramsay
Director, Bureau of Recruiting and Examining
U.S. Civil Service Commission

THE WORLD of forms can be baffling to the uninitiated—especially when the form is a job application and the uninitiated is an applicant putting so many hopes for the future into one set of papers.

To say that we're trying to ease the bafflement by making Federal job applications more complete may appear to be a contradiction. "More complete" means longer, and longer can't possibly be better, right? Wrong. "More complete" is essentially *our* job, which in turn makes the applicant's job easier, less time-consuming, less frustrating, more productive in the end.

Take the Mid-Level examination announcement, for example, covering many kinds of positions at the GS-9, 11, and 12 levels. We've making changes in the examination forms that will allow the examiner to find out easier and faster who is best qualified for a vacancy, thus speeding up the job-finding search for the applicant, the end result being that the forms starting the process have served everyone better.

The way the Mid-Level has worked, data on the application forms and methods for retrieving the data require that examiners look at all applications that appear to qualify for a position. This is just to determine whether the candidates meet basic requirements



for the grade and occupation, whether they have the knowledge and skills to perform the duties of the specific position being filled.

Say an agency has a job opening for a GS-11 program analyst, a position requiring knowledge of energy conservation programs and skill in cost-effectiveness analysis. The examiner has to review perhaps several hundred applications in order to refer to the agency the five to ten best qualified candidates.

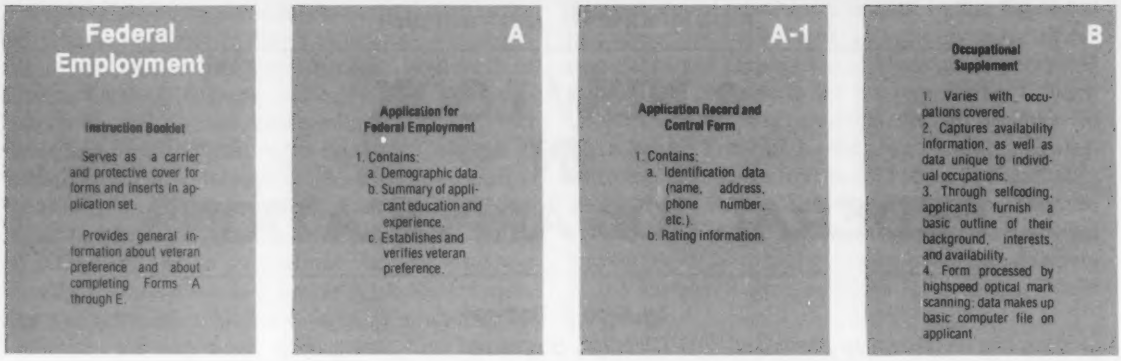
Under Development

Using new application forms and automated processes now being developed by the Bureau of Recruiting and Examining, the examiner will rapidly narrow the field to a few dozen applicants having the basic qualifications and specialized knowledge. Then the names of the best qualified can be pulled out for referral to the hiring agency.

The availability of more specific occupationally related qualifications information, allowing easier and faster screening of candidates' qualifications, is one of several advantages of new application forms and procedures. The new way is also expected to result in faster response to agencies' hiring needs, a better match between candidates' qualifications and job requirements, and an easier time for applicants who have to provide the needed information.

This is all part of a broad-based effort to modernize the Federal examining system (described in the October-December 1976 *Journal*). The new application forms and procedures are designed to overcome the inadequacies of old forms, as well as to meet the information needs of the users.

Because of legal requirements, evolution in occupational specialization, and new examining methods, Civil Service Commission examiners need more and better information on applicants' qualifications. And they need this information in a form that permits quick and easy retrieval so that the best qualified candidates can be identified from among the millions


Federal Employment
Instruction Booklet
Serves as a carrier and protective cover for forms and inserts in application set.
Provides general information about veteran preference and about completing Forms A through E.
A
Application for Federal Employment
1. Contains:
a. Demographic data.
b. Summary of applicant education and experience.
c. Establishes and verifies veteran preference.
A-1
Application Record and Control Form
1. Contains:
a. Identification data (name, address, phone number, etc.).
b. Rating information.
B
Occupational Supplement
1. Varies with occupations covered.
2. Captures availability information, as well as data unique to individual occupations.
3. Through selfcoding, applicants furnish a basic outline of their background, interests, and availability.
4. Form processed by highspeed optical mark scanning; data makes up basic computer file on applicant.

of applicants filing for Federal positions each year. Competing with these needs is the necessity to get the information without burdening the applicant and without making the application process more difficult.

The new application package described in this article will be used first for scientific and professional occupations, then expanded to other fields. It is part of a major change in approach to collecting, evaluating, and processing data on applicants' qualifications under a new nationwide System of Comprehensive Operations for Recruiting and Examining (Project SCORE).

What's New

To reduce the number of different forms now in use, a standard application package was designed to pull together the data commonly required of most Federal job applicants. This package can be used for occupations requiring a written test as well as for those in which qualifications are judged by evaluating the applicant's experience and education. The booklet's contents are shown (above).

The new forms, and the procedures accompanying them, differ from current practices in that the data collected are directed to a specific occupation rather than to a broad range of occupations. They contain much more information on the conditions under which the applicant is available for work. And they are designed so that computer systems can be used to speed processing of applications and data retrieval.

Applicant information is tailored to specific occupations through the Occupational Supplement and the Qualifications Information Statement. Instead of one announcement covering many occupations within certain grade ranges, job information and application instructions are oriented toward all grades within an occupation.

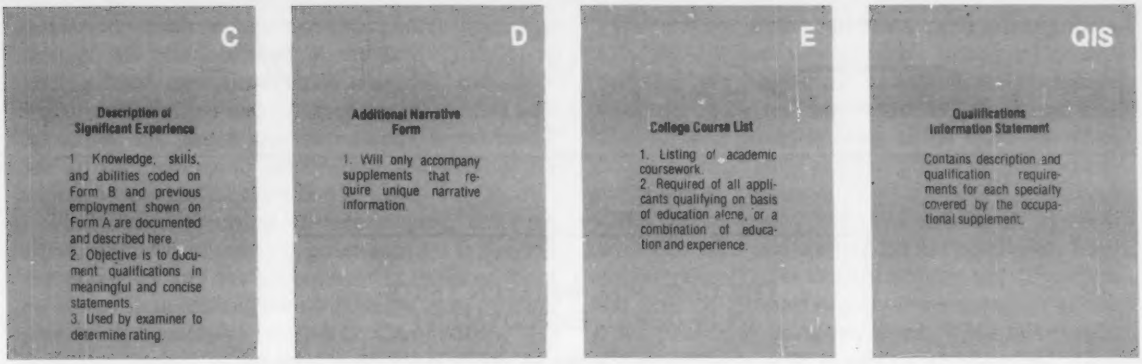
For example, under the Mid-Level announcement now used, a person may apply for jobs at grades GS-9, 11, or 12 in occupations ranging from criminal investigation to urban planning and personnel management. From 175 specialties in 16 occupational groups, the applicant selects three broad occupational specialty areas for which he or she wishes to apply.

Using the Occupational Supplement, applicants will be able to apply for several definitive specialties within a single occupational group in grades ranging from GS-5 through 15 (except for certain occupations where GS-5 and 7 jobs will continue to be filled through PACE, the Professional and Administrative Career Examination). A separate supplement, with specific instructions and forms, will be produced for each occupation; supplements will cover, for example, security and investigator positions, social sciences, and administrative and management support positions.

Eventually there will be 29 different occupational supplements, each accompanied by its own Qualifications Information Statement (QIS).

The QIS is essentially a road map for the applicant to use in deciding whether he or she meets the qualification requirements for a particular occupation, and in providing needed data on the forms. It contains a list and description of each specialty covered by the supplement, specific experience and education requirements for each specialty, and examples of the type, nature, and level of responsibility of work performed in the Federal service at each grade level covered by the statement. The QIS replaces the examination announcement—a document covering similar information but in more general terms because it has to cover more occupations and specialties.

A better match between candidates and job is expected to result from having more information (for example—specialties, functions, environments, education majors) and from the improved quality of narrative


C
Description of Significant Experience
1. Knowledge, skills, and abilities coded on Form B and previous employment shown on Form A are documented and described here.
2. Objective is to document qualifications in meaningful and concise statements.
3. Used by examiner to determine rating.
D
Additional Narrative Form
1. Will only accompany supplements that require unique narrative information.
E
College Course List
1. Listing of academic coursework.
2. Required of all applicants qualifying on basis of education alone, or a combination of education and experience.
QIS
Qualifications Information Statement
Contains description and qualification requirements for each specialty covered by the occupational supplement.

descriptions of experience. And the government will come out ahead in terms of a more effective Federal work force.

In addition, the new forms contain more data on the applicant's availability for work under certain conditions: geographic location, pay level, temporary or part-time job, frequency of travel, work environment (such as isolated areas), and organizational setting (such as correctional or medical facilities). These data will produce a referral to the hiring agencies of only those candidates who can reasonably be expected to accept the job, thereby reducing the agency's need to solicit further information.

All these advances are made possible by one key element: automatic data processing. The Occupational Supplement can be read by the optical scanning device (the same machine used to score written tests) and the data stored in the computer for rapid retrieval. Using computer processing allows us to handle the increase in volume of data in less time and reduces manual workload.

The ADP system is also adaptable to a variety of occupations and examining techniques. It will not become rapidly obsolete as occupational specialization and personel measurement techniques evolve. Furthermore, since ADP occasionally malfunctions, the forms can be processed manually.

The Applicant's Viewpoint

While it may appear that the forms are more complex from the applicant's standpoint, our tests show this is not a problem. In fact, applicants find it easier to describe their experience in a more organized, structured manner.

Most determinations of qualifications for professional and administrative positions above the entry level are made by evaluating, against an occupational standard and the duties of the position, the applicant's education and experience. These evaluations depend heavily on the applicant's narrative description of his or her experience. The examiner must decide from this narrative whether the applicant has the knowledge, skills, and abilities required by the position. We have designed the narrative forms and accompanying instructions so that applicants must clearly describe not only the duties of their previous positions, but also their level of responsibility and accomplishments.

By drawing out the applicant's own description of each previous job, the new forms generate the information needed to make qualifications decisions without getting extraneous data. In many cases this means that the applicant must provide more detailed information than under other forms (such as the SF-171). But field tests show that they have no objection to supplying such detail.

Because of the more explicit statements that we provide under the new system, fewer applicants misjudge their qualifications, and applicants are less apt to apply for jobs for which they do not meet requirements. Our tests showed that use of the new forms resulted in more applicants correctly identifying jobs for which they qualified. This benefit reduces the number of frustrated applicants. It also points the way to potential savings by reducing the Commission's workload in processing applications from unqualified cnadidates.

To shorthand the benefits, we believe the forms will:

- ☐ Obtain necessary data on an applicant's qualifications—knowledge, skills, and abilities—for comparison with requirements of the occupation or job being filled.
- ☐ Specify the conditions under which the applicant is available for work.
- ☐ Be flexible enough to accommodate information requirements of many different occupations, and both automated and manual processing systems.
- ☐ Enhance the examiners' ability to make valid measurement of an applicant's qualifications, and provide more complete information to agencies.
- ☐ Meet all of these needs without placing an undue paperwork burden on applicants by requiring them to provide irrelevant information. CSJ

PERSONNEL RESEARCH ROUNDUP

THE CASE FOR WRITTEN TESTS IN FEDERAL EMPLOYMENT

This is the last in a series of articles addressing some of the critical questions raised about written tests. This final article draws from the previous ones and fills in some gaps concerning the relevance, utility, and fairness of tests. It also discusses some of the psychometric and value judgments underlying these issues.

Summary Questions

The questions posed in this series were those most commonly raised concerning the use of written tests in Federal employment. These included questions as to the relevance and necessity of tests, their fairness, why they are so frequently attacked, what alternatives to tests are available, and the probable consequences of those alternatives. From a legal, psychometric, and practical viewpoint, these answers may be summarized as follows.

Summary Answers

Written tests in Federal employment fulfill the requirements of law, regulation, and policy for job-related and valid examining, which ranks applicants in order of merit to allow for selection from among the best qualified. In many instances they are the only available method for meeting these requirements. They are needed, and usually only used, for positions that (1) require types or levels of abilities for which adequate information about the applicants is not otherwise available; and/or (2) are so critical that maximum accuracy must be used to make selections; and/or (3) the number of applicants is so large that any other method is not economically feasible.

Federal tests are required to be job-related and valid. This means (1) they are based on a thorough analysis of job requirements and abilities necessary to perform them successfully (job analysis), and (2) there is documented evidence of the relationship of the test to job performance (validity).

There are many alternatives to written tests in use. These may be used in conjunction with tests or alone. Alternatives are employed more frequently than tests above the entry level because the individual has had work and other experience to use in assessing relevant abilities. Given the existing state-of-the-art in personnel measurement, however, written tests provide better estimates of the probability of success and greater cost-effectiveness than any of the alternatives. The table below compares tests with some commonly employed alternatives, with generalized estimates of their consequences.

Method	*Validity*	*Cost*
1. Written tests of knowledge, skill, or ability	Moderate to high	Low to moderate
2. Performance tests/ assessment centers	Moderate to high	High
3. Probation period	Moderate to high	High
4. Job element examining	Moderate	Moderate
5. Ratings of experience and education/training	Varies	Moderate
6. Supervisory ratings	Low to Moderate	Low
7. Self-ratings	Low	Low
8. Interviews	Low	Varies
9. Reference checks/ background investigations	None to low	Varies
10. Physical characteristics	None to low	Low

Tests have been characterized as fair in these articles because (1) they are the most accurate available

predictors of job success, and thus permit identification of the best qualified candidates; (2) they are standardized, and permit equal treatment and ranking of competitors; and (3) they are job-related and objective, and hence provide an equal opportunity for all competitors to demonstrate the abilities required to succeed in the job.

The greater precision of measurement achieved through the use of tests has general utility. It benefits the taxpayers and the government in terms of more efficiency in predicting who will be the most productive and successful workers. Competitors are benefited because of the greater assurance of successful job placement. Finally, society's human resources are optimally used. These requirements clearly value efficiency, economy, and individual rights. And these are values traditionally accepted as fundamental American values.

Test Fairness, Adverse Impact, and Today's Values

There have been in recent years serious challenges to these traditional values and to the fundamental usefulness and fairness of tests. Some consider tests unfair when they show adverse impact in relation to a particular group. This means a significantly lower proportion of one group than of another group either passes the test or gets the jobs.

When this became evident in the 1950's and 60's, it was first thought that while there were differences in test performance there were no real differences in job performance, and that tests simply did not predict performance as well for some groups as for others. This notion, called differential prediction, was not supported by subsequent research.

Where there is adequate research to reach conclusions, the evidence now available indicates that differential prediction is a statistically chance phenomenon. A test that is soundly developed and valid for one group is likely to be valid for other groups; it accurately and fairly predicts job performance for all comers.

The absence of differential prediction in well-developed tests and studies did not resolve the controversy. Clearly, the existence of real test differences may result in proportionately fewer members of one group passing or being employed. When this occurs, adverse impact exists. If adverse impact exists, it appears to be evidence of discrimination under the law, unless and until the employer can prove that the selection procedure is job-related.

Since adverse impact is the triggering mechanism for costly litigation, some employers resort to less valid employment procedures or to other systems in order to achieve equal or representative employment among groups. Some of these alternatives clearly strain traditional economic and individual rights values.

For Federal, and also for other employers operating under merit system requirements, the emphasis remains on individual merit. The mandate is for valid, job-related procedures with economic value. Scientifically, these conditions can be met, for psychometric theory is based upon individual differences. A test can fairly and accurately provide equal opportunity for individuals to demonstrate ability to perform a job. What the psychological measurement cannot do is provide a valid procedure that assures equal probability of success for members of groups based on characteristics unrelated to performance ability, when real ability levels differ among members of the groups.

—Helen J. Christrup

APPEALS DIGEST

Reduction in Force

Assignment rules

The appellant was separated by reduction-in-force procedures from his WG-5 position. At the time of the RIF action, the appellant was carried in a leave-without-pay status because of recurrence of an injury received on the job that prevented him from performing his duties. The agency did not grant a right of assignment to another WG-5 position because of the appellant's physical condition.

The field office, after finding that the appellant's physical disqualification for the WG-5 position

resulted from an injury for which he was receiving compensation, concluded that the agency's denial of an assignment right to the WG-5 position was in violation of section 351.701(c) of the Commission's regulations, which prohibits denial of an assignment right under the circumstances depicted in this case.

The field office reversed the RIF action and recommended that the appellant be restored to duty and that he be given appropriate assignment rights subject to his recovery, in accordance with section 351.701(c). (Decision No. DC035160137.)

Discrimination Complaint

Corrective action

During the counseling stage of this complaint, the agency told the complainant that certain actions were being taken to resolve his allegations of discrimination. The complaintant then advised the agency that its actions were not sufficient to resolve the matters giving rise to those allegations, and he filed a formal complaint of discrimination. When the complaint was rejected, on the grounds that the agency could take no further corrective action, the complainant appealed to the Appeals Review Board.

The Board found that the agency's belief that no further corrective action would be appropriate was not among the bases provided by part 713 of the civil service regulations for rejection of complaints. It found further that the complainant was entitled to an investigation of the matters leading to the complaint, to a decision on the validity of his allegation of discrimination, and possibly to other corrective action.

For these reasons, the Board reversed the agency rejection of the complaint and returned the matter to the agency for processing under part 713. (Decision No. RB071361183.)

Adverse Actions

Employee answer

In its notice of proposed removal, the agency advised the appellant that he could submit an oral response to the charges against him. A union official subsequently advised the agency that the appellant wished to make an oral response, and asked for an appointment to do so. The agency failed to reply either to the appellant or to the union official within the time allowed for the oral response, and a decision to remove the appellant was issued.

In connection with the appeal to the FEAA field office, the agency contended that (1) the appellant's position was not included in any organization for which the union was the recognized bargaining agent, (2) the appellant did not have an absolute right to be represented when making an oral reply, and (3) the appellant himself had not requested an opportunity to make such a reply.

The field office found that the agency had an obligation to advise the appellant, directly or through the union official, of the agency's position on the matter, so that the appellant could have a fair opportunity to reply orally to the charges against him. Because the agency failed to do so, the field office found the action procedurally defective and recommended its cancellation. (Decision No. DC752B700-02.)

Theft of Government property

The appellee was removed based on a charge of theft of Government property. The FEAA field office found the charge sustained, but determined that the penalty of removal was too severe in light of the fact that the item the appellee had taken had very little value. The field office reversed the removal.

The Appeals Review Board granted the agency's request for reopening because the field office decision involved a misinterpretation and misapplication of Commission policy. The Board noted the established Commission policy that when an employee is removed because he stole from his employing agency, the Commission will not, on grounds of value, overturn the removal—nor will it do so because it is the employee's first offense. The Commission views such cases as involving a violation of the trust between employee and employer for which the agency must be accorded widest discretion.

The Board reversed the field office decision and affirmed the firing of the employee. (Decision No. RB752B60520 (DC752B60226).)

Paul D. Mahoney

a computer-assisted
systems approach

LABOR RELATIONS INFORMATION DELIVERY IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

by Ronald A. Leahy
Assistant Director for
Information Services
Office of Labor-Management Relations
U.S. Civil Service Commission

Public sector labor-management relations practitioners have not escaped the deluge of information that has saturated virtually every aspect of modern personnel management in public service in the United States. During the past two decades, the Federal Government's labor relations program has been producing a burgeoning, complex mass of information in various forms—regulations, negotiated agreements, arbitration awards, and rulings of administrative bodies.

Moreover, State and local governments, numbering in the tens of thousands, have accumulated a store of data many times greater than that generated by the Federal sector.

At the same time, the labor relations data needs of elected officials, government agencies, and public labor organizations have not only expanded dramatically, but have become crucial to effective decisionmaking in agencies that negotiate or consult with labor organizations.

Growth in Public Employee Representation

The magnitude of this groundswell becomes apparent when one considers the meteoric

rise in labor organization representation of public employees in recent years. In the Federal Government, shortly after President Kennedy conferred formal status on labor-management relations in his 1962 Executive Order (No. 10988), fewer than 200,000 employees were represented by labor organizations. This number grew to 900,000 by 1970. Further expansion was stimulated by Executive Order 11491 (1970), which added new, intricate dimensions to the program; and by Executive Order 11636 (1971), which applied to employees in the Foreign Service.

By 1975, more than 1.2 million employees (a six-fold increase during just 12 years) were represented in some 4,000 local units, in more than 50 Federal agencies, nationwide and overseas.

At the same time, State and local governments experienced an equivalent growth in employee representation. The 1972 Census of Governments reports that as of October 1972, 4,319,941 full-time State and local government employees (50.4 percent of all employees) were members of employee organizations. Of the 78,268 State and local governments, 10,737 engaged in collective negotiations and/or consultation and had 19,547 negotiated agreements.

(For more information, see *Census of Governments*, U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1972, Vol. 3, Public Employment No. 3: Management-Labor Relations in State and Local Government, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1974.)

New Demands on Public Managers

As these labor-management programs have expanded in size and number, they have become much more structured and complex. Consequently, public managers must meet extraordinary new demands. They must fairly apply wide-ranging merit system regulations. At the same time, they must meet the requirements of negotiated agreements that touch

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on nearly every facet of personnel policy and work conditions. Adding to the burden is the fact that these agreements are laden with provisions often subject to interpretation through arbitration or similar procedures.

But a computer-assisted system—Labor Agreement Information Retrieval System (LAIRS)—was developed recently at CSC that will help. It has improved the organization and delivery of labor relations information. Although the CSC staff devised LAIRS to satisfy the Federal Government's needs, the system also has some immediate applicability in State and local government labor relations. It could pave the way for develop-

Labor relations specialists read the search results coming through the computer terminal...

find the appropriate card in the microfiche file...

and place the card in a reader/printer to make the information available.

(CSC photos)

ment of similar intergovernmental systems.

It was in 1972 that the U.S. Civil Service Commission first recognized the intense need for a coordinated, Federal Government-wide method for accumulating, organizing, retrieving, and disseminating useful information from this vast mélange of intelligence. It was immediately evident that systems then in existence, relying principally on manual techniques, would be grossly inadequate both in the short and the long run.

LAIRS Takes Shape

After nearly 2 years of concerted effort, closely orchestrated with agency management and labor organizations, the Commission in December 1974 announced the new LAIRS.

The Labor Agreement Information Retrieval System is a multifaceted service center providing current and historical information about the Federal labor relations program. The information takes the form of computer searches, microfiche of full text decisions, published analytical reports, current periodicals, and a variety of other audio-visual training aids.

The computer/microfiche file contains negotiated agreements, arbitration awards, and significant case decisions of the Federal Labor Relations Council, the Assistant Secretary of Labor for Labor-Management Relations, the Federal Service Impasses Panel, the Comptroller General, and the Federal Employee Appeals Authority. More than 10,000 documents are coded by subject matter for computerized indexing, and microfiche storage and retrieval.

The LAIRS system employs a nationwide timesharing system called INFONET, which provides the teleprocessing network for immediate (interactive) or overnight (batch) searching of the computer files through a keyboard terminal located at the U.S. Civil Service Commission in Washington, D.C. INFONET was conceived, designed, and implemented by Computer Sciences Corporation in response to timesharing requirements of both business and government data processing users.

The U.S. Civil Service Commission acquires INFONET services through the General Services Administration. The Commission's own data processing center provides file update service three times yearly and produces regular and ad hoc programmed reports.

Normally computer searches are couched in precise, uniform terms in combination to describe a special or unique information need. Requesters may choose from among hundreds of subject categories and thousands of subtopical variations in conjunction with frequency of occurrence, agency or labor union identifiers, number and occupation of affected employees, and geographic location of work unit, among numerous other options.

Often a requester needs a computer printout of all records on file in a predetermined sequence or format. Such requests are filled within a few days to a few weeks, depending on the complexity of the programming required, urgency of the need, cost considerations, and LAIRS staff time required.

How To Use LAIRS

Although the system was established primarily to serve Federal agencies and certified labor organizations representing Federal Government employees, written requests for information are accepted from most other organizations and individuals. Regular users have a manual of instructions and forms for submitting requests. All other requesters are required to submit a written statement of the publication(s) or other information desired to: U.S. Civil Service Commission, Office of Labor-Management Relations, LAIRS Section, 1900 E St. NW., Washington, D.C. 20415; or to one of the 10 regional offices of the U.S. Civil Service Commission located in major cities across the United States.

Nominal fees are charged for computer searches and for microfiche copies. For Federal agencies, this means that an interagency reimbursement is required. Other requesters are billed. For regular high-frequency users, a subscription arrangement is available that reduces costs and expedites transactions. A schedule of fees is provided upon written request.

Frequently, LAIRS publishes labor-management reports and surveys. These may be purchased from the National Technical Information Service (NTIS) in paper-copy or microfiche form. NTIS, part of the U.S. Department of Commerce, is a central source for the public sale of Government-sponsored research reports and other analyses prepared by Federal agencies. It is located at 5285 Port Royal Road, Springfield, Va. 22161. A public reference room, located at the U.S. Civil Service Commission in Washington, D.C., is also available for use by appointment. There is, of course, no fee charged for this service.

The LAIRS system is designed not only to serve the Federal labor-management information needs of today, but tomorrow as well. Expansion and contraction in the scope of negotiable topics can be quickly reflected in the data file. If future demand dictates a requirement for direct access to the computer file from multiple locations throughout the nation, the system has the inherent capacity to respond, without need to redesign programs or files. CSJ

when is a secretary really a secretary?

Secretaries and Position Management Practices

The Federal service employs approximately 60,000 secretaries, an investment large enough to warrant care in management and job design. Today, over 95 percent of these positions are filled by women—interesting, since when the typewriter was invented in the 18th Century, it was considered so complicated that only men could operate it.

The Civil Service Commission is currently studying the occupation of secretary as part of its effort to develop new position classification and qualification standards. Although the study is not being conducted for position management purposes, its early findings show that management needs to improve the design and management of secretarial assignments. For example, interviews with secretaries and their supervisors show that:

☐ Many people called secretaries aren't secretaries. They are given only typing, stenography, and very routine clerical work to perform. It's honest work, and sometimes hard work, and it's a big help. But they aren't secretaries. Those who take such jobs expecting to be secretaries or to become secretaries are disappointed. Those who would have gladly taken the jobs as typists or clerks aren't considered.

☐ Many, perhaps most, supervisors have very little idea of what their secretaries are doing, or should be doing.

☐ Many secretaries have poorly defined assignments. Too many secretaries are unaware of what their assignments should or could include. Having little knowledge of what is expected, they wait to be asked before beginning a task.

☐ In some offices, the secretarial assignments seem to be affected, consciously or not, by an overly protective attitude toward women. The secretaries (almost invariably women) are not expected to show initiative or to develop any serious understanding of the purpose and administrative needs of the organization. Clearly, it is hard for the secretary to develop such an understanding, and if it is developed it does little good, since there's no demand for it. Little is expected of the secretary, and given such a management attitude, the expectation is realistic.

☐ Many secretary positions are graded on the basis of echelon alone, rather than on the duties, responsibiiities, and qualification requirements of the assignment.

These problems are widespread, and they needn't be. But these problems would be markedly reduced if managers would consider even the following brief checklist.

✔ Don't decide you want a secretary and then think up duties to occupy a secretary's time. Think first of the duties to be performed, then of the knowledge, skills, and abilities required. Only then should you consider the title, occupation, and grade of the position.

✔ Tailor the position description to the requirements of the individual—don't rely entirely on standard position descriptions. Use standard descriptions only when several positions are very similar.

✔ Prepare a detailed task list for the position, refining and adding to it. Write it down. If you haven't thought enough about it to write it down, you haven't thought enough about it to invest money in the position.

✔ Write down:

—How you intend to assign the work and establish priorities.

—What you will consider evidence of good secretarial performance.

—How you plan to review the work.

✔ Talk to your secretary. Explain what you expect, both in terms of what duties are to be performed and how independently they are to be performed.

✔ Grant the secretary some independence. Let the job expand to fill the competence of the employee, if possible. People can become more responsible and more creative with experience and practice. Let it be known that you rely on your secretary.

✔ Ask the secretary to suggest additions and changes, and then seriously consider them.

✔ Don't confuse abandoning the employee with granting independence of action. Stay aware of what work should be done by the secretary, and what is done.

—John S. Warman
Bureau of Policies and Standards
U.S. Civil Service Commission

Upward Mobility—
Making It Work

In a 1969 report to the President on equal employment opportunity, the Civil Service Commission observed that, while the door to Federal employment had been opened to significant numbers of minorities and women, ". . . too many of our minority employees are concentrated at the lower grade levels, victims of inadequate education and past discrimination. Our women employees are also concentrated at the lower grade levels."

The Commission's recommended response to this problem, endorsed by the White House, was to develop and implement a program within a program that came to be known as upward mobility.

With strong White House support, and program guidance from CSC, upward mobility has evolved since 1969 as a key element of the total EEO effort of the Federal Government. In 1972, Congress took specific note of its significance and wrote into the new Federal employment provisions of the Civil Rights Act a requirement for ". . . training and education programs designed to provide a maximum opportunity for employees to advance so as to perform at their highest potential."

Upward mobility is defined as a systematic management effort that focuses Federal personnel policy and practice on development and implementation of specific career opportunities for lower level employees (generally, this means employees below GS-9 or equivalent) who are in positions or occupational series that do not let them realize their full work potential. Opportunities to participate in upward mobility programs must be open to all eligible employees equally, and selection of participants must adhere to merit principles.

Critical to the success of upward mobility programs—and unfortunately overlooked in some agencies' first efforts—is identification of target jobs for participants to move into after training. As a first step, therefore, management has to analyze and project its staffing needs. Only then can selection criteria and training related to those needs, and to the needs of the lower level employees who will participate, be planned realistically.

The training component of an upward mobility program generally includes some combination of on-the-job and formal training, tailored to the needs of each participant and written into individual training plans. Methods also have to be developed to measure each trainee's progress toward the goal of full qualification for the target job. Effective career counseling must be built into the program all the way through so that trainees, or potential trainees, know what is expected of them and what they can expect to get from the program.

Finally, programs should be evaluated on a continuing basis to gauge strengths and weaknesses, and assure that improvements are made when and where needed.

The *EEO Spotlight*, a bimonthly publication of the Civil Service Commission, has reviewed a number of Federal agency upward mobility programs over the last few years. These *Spotlight* feature articles show how Federal agencies have built successful programs incorporating variations of the basic elements described above.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), of example, designed and develope an upward mobility program to help fulfill its basic scientific mission. The purpose of the program is to achieve better use of NOAA manpower, discover and train men and women with a high degree of potential for contributing to the agency's missions, and improve opportunities for upward mobility and equal employment throughout the agency.

NOAA's program has included training opportunities in the fields of cartography, engineering, hydrology, meteorology, oceanography, and physics. Its upward mobility program was begun in 1973 with a coordinator, five counselors, and an approved CSC training agreement.

Nuclear Regulatory Commission's top management sees its upward mobility program, called Development and Advancement of Regulatory Employees (DARE), as a ready source of needed skills. DARE provides opportunities for employees to qualify for more responsible and rewarding posi-

tions, makes full use of the available skills of lower graded employees, and provides advancement opportunities for employees in deadended positions. The program is implemented by a policy committee made up of representatives from the EEO office, the office of personnel, and a program coordinator. Pram guidance is provided by a seven-member Upward Mobility Task Force appointed by the program coordinator.

The upward mobility staff of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) worked with top agency managers to assure the commitment and support needed to implement a successful program. From the onset, all target positions had to be legitimate projected vacancies and bona fide positions. NASA has three specific upward mobility program components covered by CSC-approved training agreements:

GO (Growth Opportunity) enables nonprofessional employees from GS-2 through 9 to enter paraprofessional career ladders, which may or may not be allied to an employee's present occupation, and be trained for a target position with a higher promotion potential.

STEP (Specialty Training for Entry Professionals) permits nonprofessional employees, GS-5 through 10, to enter professional ranks with training from 12 to 18 months, depending on the entry level and needs of the participant. The program offers participants eligibility for promotion to the next higher grade level upon successful completion of training.

The CROSSOVER program permits employees (GS-5 through 10) in administrative and technician jobs, offering limited opportunity fordvancement, to be trained for different positions with higher growth potential.

NASA's upward mobility program is monitored on a day-to-day basis by participants' supervisors and by the upward mobility staff. Counseling for participants begins when applications are accepted and continues throughout the program.

One of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's upward mobility programs is designed to provide education and training to lower graded employees in the Washington, D.C., area. After the first year of implementation, Agriculture evaluated the adequacy of program design, effectiveness of program adminstration, and value of the program to management and employees. The evaluation used questionnaires and in-depth interviews.

As a result of the evaluation, USDA found it needed tighter administration, including better designation of target positions and final placement of participants; improved communication; better preparation of the employee, the supervisor, and the personnel office in counseling and other areas; and better training plans. The evaluation showed that 96 percent of all employees and 87 percent of all supervisors or managers sampled felt that the upward mobility program should be continued and that it was the best system for providing career opportunities to employees in the lower grades.

Other Federal agencies, including the General Accounting Office, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Federal Highway Administration, and Department of the Navy, have used job restructuring to create "bridge positions" for upward mobility participants.

The "bridge position" technique frequently involves converting specified professional positions to technician level by combining the lower level tasks of several professional jobs. The overall goal of this technique is to enable program participants to systematically develop skills necessary to cross over from one specialty to another offering greater advancement potential.

Detailed upward mobility program guidance is available by writing to the U.S. Civil Service Commission, Office of Federal Equal Employment Opportunity, Upward Mobility Section, Room 7H19, 1900 E St. NW., Washington, D.C. 20415.

—Ed Shell

LEGAL DECISIONS

Sex Discrimination Revisited

Sex discrimination in employment has been the subject of recent interesting decisions of the Supreme Court and the lower Federal courts. Questions presented have ranged from the right of a private employer to exclude pregnancy from disabilities covered by its disability benefit plan, to the right of a female employee to assert sex discrimination when her employer fires her for refusing his sexual advances.

No Disability Benefits for Pregnancy

In *General Electric Company* v. *Gilbert*, the Supreme Court held that the exclusion of pregnancy-related disabilities from General Electric's employee disability benefits plan was not unlawful sex discrimination in violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Plaintiffs were female employees who had been absent from work because of pregnancy and had been denied disability benefits.

In an opinion by Justice Rehnquist, it was held that the exclusion of pregnancy was not in itself discrimination based on sex, but instead merely removed one kind of physical condition from coverage. The Court found the employer had no intent to discriminate against women. Rather, it found that pregnancy, unlike the "diseases" covered by the plan, is often a voluntarily undertaken and desired condition.

The Court was unpersuaded by the fact that the disability benefit plan covered absences caused by voluntary cosmetic surgery and vasectomies, while excluding not only absence for healthy pregnancy but any complications due to pregnancy.

In addition, the Court concluded that the plan was nothing more than an insurance package covering some risks, excluding others, and covering the same categories of risk as to both men and women. It observed that the financial consequences of covering pregnancy would be overly burdensome.

The *Gilbert* decision has caused no little controversy among civil rights groups, many of which are urging Congress to pass remedial legislation.

It is noteworthy that in contrast to this private employer's disability plan, the Federal Government provides that a pregnant employee may take sick leave, annual leave, and reasonable leave without pay for pregnancy and confinement, and assured continued employment in her position or one of like seniority, status, and pay upon her return. (See FPM Supplement 990-2, Book 630, Subchapter S-13.) The Federal Government however, has no provision for the payment of benefits for any type of disability.

Title VII Covers Sexual Harassment

One District Court judge in the District of Columbia has held that an employer who retaliated against his employee after she refused his sexual advances has committed unlawful sex discrimination under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

The case, *Williams* v. *Saxbe*, involved a female employee whose employment for the first 6 months was free of controversy. But allegedly after she rejected her employer's advances, she was subject to his unwarranted reprimands, refusal to inform her of matters she needed to know to do her work, refusal to recognize her proposals and recommendations, and finally, termination for alleged poor work performance.

The court found these retaliatory actions constituted unlawful sex discrimination, in a decision which rejects the weight of opinion on this issue both before and after the decision. Courts have traditionally viewed such sexual harassment as a personality conflict between employer and employee. They have held that no matter how inexcusable the supervisor's conduct, it does not evidence a barrier to plantiff's opportunity for equal employment based on her gender.

In contrast, the court in *Williams* found that the supervisor had established his own policy about who must submit to his sexual advances, that such submission was a precondition of plaintiff's continued employment, and that that policy discriminated against plaintiff because of her sex.

Members of Congress Can't Discriminate

Although Members of Congress have exempted themselves from the definition of "employer" for the purposes of title VII, the Court of Appeals for the

Fifth Circuit held in *Davis* v. *Passman* that the Fifth Amendment prevents Congressman Otto Passman of Louisiana from discriminating against his employees.

Noting that "in this case a Member of the United States Congress unflinchingly asserts that the Constitution allows him openly to discriminate against women," the Court found that "(a)lthough representatives admittedly have some insulation not wrapped around ordinary mortals. . .our Constitution protects individual rights even against the mighty. . ."

The female plaintiff in the case had been Congressman Passman's deputy administrative assistant, whom he fired. As he stated in a letter to her, "on account of the unusually heavy workload in my Washington office, and the diversity of the job, I concluded that it was essential that the understudy to my administrative assistant be a man."

Whereas Congressman Passman held that he was immune from suit because of his status as a Member of Congress, the court disagreed, and remanded the case to the trial court for a determination of whether all the facts in the case pointed toward discrimination against plaintiff on the basis of her sex. In so doing, the Court of Appeals held that a Congressman's actions cannot escape constitutional scrutiny.

Sex Discrimination Found Where Another Woman Got the Job

Another interesting decision in the District of Columbia District Court, *Skelton* v. *Balzano*, involved a woman who alleged that she was discriminated against, even though the person selected for the position plaintiff desired was another woman.

The evidence introduced at the trial demonstrated that ACTION's regional director plotted to deny a State program directorship to plaintiff because he felt she was overly aggressive and "pushy." Instead, he intentionally appointed another woman to supervise plaintiff in the hope that they would "devour each other."

The court found that if the female plaintiff had been a man, she would not have been treated in the same manner, and at the very least would have been afforded a genuine opportunity to advance. In contrast, the regional director's alleged antipathy for all women motivated him to mistreat plaintiff.

The case is unusual in that the female plaintiff prevailed in her claim of sex discrimination, even though the discriminating official had appointed a female to the position in dispute.

Man May Be Women's Program Head

Morris v. *Crosby* involved a black male's allegation that in job announcements for a trainee position as assistant to the Federal Women's Program Coordinator, the use of the pronouns "she" and "her" in describing the job duties and qualifications discouraged men from applying and discriminated against him because of his sex.

The Pennsylvania District Court rejected that allegation. Instead, it found that the women who had been selected for the positions were more qualified than plaintiff, and that the use of feminine pronouns in the job announcement did not predispose the selecting official to select a female.

In sum, the court found that just as masculine pronouns in job announcements do not in and of themselves evidence discrimination against women, so feminine pronouns in job announcements do not discriminate against men. The court must look to whether the selection process itself was free from discrimination in intent or effect.

—Elizabeth L. Newman

WORTH NOTING

(Continued)

for first time: The ratio of Federal employees represented by labor organizations to total Federal employment has decreased for the first time in the 14 years that such statistics have been kept.

The decline is only from 59 percent in 1975 to 58 percent in 1976 and "is consistent with the stable situation that has existed in the highly organized Federal work force in recent years," the Commission said.

The Commission's annual report on labor organization recognition and negotiated agreements as of November 1976 shows that agreements have been negotiated in 40 additional "recognition units," 1 percent over 1975 and 11 percent over 1974.

Employees covered by negotiated agreements decreased 2 percent, to 1,059,663, or 89 percent of all employees under exclusive recognition. Of the entire nonpostal Federal work force, 52 percent were covered by agreements as of November 1976.

The AFL-CIO American Federation of Government Employees increased its representation by 8,381 to 678,410 in the 12-months ending November 1976. As of that time, 89 percent of employees represented by AFGE were covered by agreements.

National Treasury Employees Union added 5,918 to its total representation of 89,786 employees, of which 94 percent were covered by agreements as of November 1976.

National Federation of Federal Employees decreased by 2,522 to a representation of 133,549, of which 90 percent were covered by agreements.

The National Association of Government Employees increased from 77,878 to 82,642.

☐ PICKETING: The Government recently withdrew its appeal of the Federal District Court decision in a National Treasury Employees Union case on picketing in a labor-management dispute under Executive Order 11491.

Last September 22, the District Court for the District of Columbia held that picketing could be prohibited only if it "actually interferes or reasonably threatens to interfere with the operation of the affected Government agency" (Civil Action No. 76-408, USDC/D.C.).

After the Government's appeal was withdrawn, the Federal Labor Relations Council announced that it will distinguish between permissible and prohibited picketing on a case-by-case basis, using expedited procedures for such complaints under the Executive order.

☐ "CLASS" discrimination regs adopted: The Commission announced the adoption of regulations for handling employees' and applicants' complaints alleging discrimination against a class or group, effective April 18.

Under the regulations a class is defined as a group of employees or applicants, one of whom alleges that they all are affected adversely by an agency personnel policy or practice. The policy or practice must be one that the agency has authority to change or eliminate, and one that discriminates against the group on the basis of their common race, color, religion, sex, national origin, or age.

The regulations require the employing agency to give notice of the allegation to all members of the class. Since resolution of class action allegations may be binding on all members of the class, the agency must provide members of the class an opportunity to remove themselves from it.

The procedures adopted are similar to those used by the courts for processing allegations of discrimination against a class. Similarly, provisions are made for a trained complaints examiner. Employees can appeal agency decisions to the Commission.

In addition, discrimination appeals can be made to the courts.

☐ MS. comes to forms: In response to the widespread use of "Ms." by American women, the U.S. Civil Service Commission has said that it is revising all of its personnel forms—including job application forms—to make "Ms." available for those who prefer it. As present stocks are depleted and the forms are reprinted, the change will be incorporated in all Commission forms that require a title.

☐ GUIDELINES permit agencies to use dues "check-off" for nonunion organizations, such as professional associations: Organizations covered by the guidelines include professional associations (defined as nonprofit organizations consisting of employees in professional, technical, or managerial fields), and employee welfare and recreational associations, religious and civic organizations, and minority and women's groups.

☐ PAY HIKES budgeted: The budget submitted to Congress by President Ford on January 17, 1977, contains provisions for possible white-collar pay increases of 6.5 percent in October 1977 and 6.25 percent in October 1978. These increases are estimates only. The actual increases will depend on the findings of a survey now being made by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and may be higher or lower than the percentage indicated in the budget.

☐ ANNUITIES increase 4.8 percent: A 4.8 percent increase in Federal retirement annuities became effective March 1, reflected in April 1 checks.

The next adjustment, under the 1976 law for computing annuity adjustments, will be effective September 1 for October 1 checks.

Another adjustment will become effective March 1, 1978, for April 1, 1978, checks.

☐ ENERGY CONSERVATION rewarded: Ideas to conserve energy are vitally needed these days. Federal employees, the people in the best position to help, are strongly encouraged to contribute in every way, the Federal incentive awards director has said.

Ideas or actions beyond job responsibilities, resulting in tangible or intangible benefits to the Government, are eligible for cash awards of up to $25,000 under the incentive awards program. Overall, $3.9 million was given in awards during 1976.

Both in Government and private industry, such programs have long been a source of needed ideas for economies and improvements, and this is particularly true in energy conservation. *—Ed Staples*

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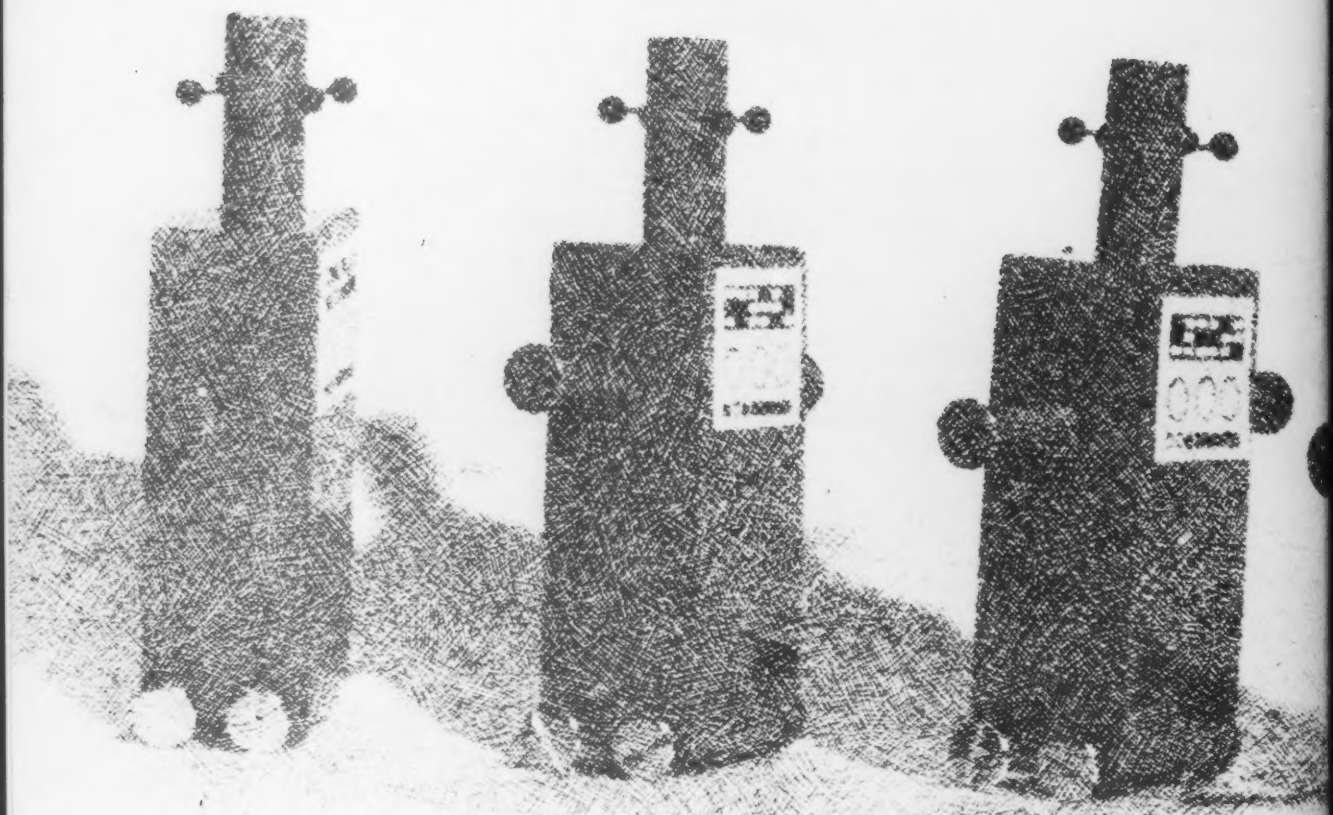
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